

# Citizen Advisory Committee Public Meeting

May 2, 2023

**Descriptive text for the title slide:** Logo for the North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency. CDBG-MIT Citizen Advisory Committee Public Meeting. May 2, 2023.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** Hey everybody, just a heads up. We're just going to wait one more minute as folks continue to jump in through the waiting room. We're letting them in. As soon as the meeting hits 10:06 a.m., we'll start. So, thanks for your patience, everybody.

>> Hey everybody.

>> I'm going to jump on and start the meeting. We still have folks trickling in through the waiting room, but I guess we can get started and then as they come in, we'll just, let folks come in. So, yeah, first things first, I want to introduce myself.

>> So good morning, everybody. Thank you all for being able to jump on and being patient. So, my name is Edgar Gomez. I'm the planning director with North Carolina's Office of Recovery and Resiliency. We've got some staff with us today.

>> I'm letting other folks in. For the staff with us today, we've got Maggie Battaglin, the director of mitigation. We've got Tracy Colores, the director of community development. We've got additional folks, but we have some folks that are feeling under the weather, but I'll just for purposes of the meeting, I'll still introduce them. We've got Matt Arlyn, who's the chief recovery officer, Cesar Castro, the chief policy and planning officer. We've got Michele Wiggins, housing opportunities manager, Bill Blankenship, project manager and subject matter expert for infrastructure.

>> So, these staff members from NCORR will be – some of them actually – will be helping us further discuss and provide detail on the CDBG-MIT programming and activity updates as part of this second meeting of the Citizen Advisory Committee, which is a part two, I guess from our January meeting and again, an opportunity to discuss updates on implementation and updates since our last advisory committee.

>> And so additionally, here, you know, as we continue to go through the meeting and the presentation, I just want to mention that NCORR remains committed to helping communities and ensures that we're working hard to remain a trusted community partner to aid communities, protect against future storm and climate impacts. And so, yeah, I just wanted to say thank you. And I'm going to discuss some additional housekeeping items and then we'll run through and confirm we have quorum after that.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 2:*** Introductory notes for the CDBG-MIT Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) public meeting.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** So, the following are some housekeeping items to keep in mind as we get on with our presentation. So, for our presentation, we're going to focus on the project implementation updates from the Community Development Block Grant – Mitigation, CDBG-MIT as it's known. And as a reminder, you can view the Action Plan on [www.rebuild.nc.gov/about/plans-policies-reports/action-plans](http://www.rebuild.nc.gov/about/plans-policies-reports/action-plans).

>> And also, to keep updated on the mitigation-related activities, you can visit [www.rebuild.nc.gov/about-us/mitigation](http://www.rebuild.nc.gov/about-us/mitigation). And as a reminder, if you're survivor of previous disasters and have questions regarding either FEMA assistance or any other questions, you can certainly reach out to the appropriate program. And for additional help, you can reach out, you can utilize [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov) for FEMA assistance. Or you can also utilize [Ask-RBNC@rebuild.nc.gov](mailto:Ask-RBNC@rebuild.nc.gov) or you can also call; it's 833-275-7262 for ReBuild NC assistance.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 3:*** Introductory notes (continued) for the CAC public meeting.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** For more information on how people with disabilities can get access and comment, please call 984-833-5350. And for hard copies again, of the CDBG-MIT Action Plan Amendment, you can call 984-272-7053. Sorry for the pause there, just folks are still trickling into the meeting.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 4:*** CAC public meeting accessibility resources.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** So, yeah, to ensure accessibility here, let's see. We're going to have the WebEx-generated closed captioning and we're going to have the transcript and slides available for participants. And also, there's going to be a translated script of the presentation along with the slides made available to the Spanish speaking community members, for those who would be interested in it. So, let us know for sure if, you can certainly reach out to us, but we can also send those out subsequently.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 5:*** CAC public meeting agenda.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** OK, so to begin.

>> In preparation for, to begin for today's meeting, I'm going to just kind of provide a quick overview of the agenda. So, we're going to begin with attendance and the quorum confirmation, and then we'll establish the meeting purpose. Then we'll go through the HUD approval of the CDBG-MIT Action Plan and those next steps, followed by the CDBG-MIT updates about the program activities since we spoke in January, specifically.

>> And then we'll touch base on some other topics, but we'll have an opportunity to chat about some updates on the Homeowner Recovery Program, CDBG-DR program updates, and then touch base on next steps and go over any questions that the Citizen Advisory Committee may have. And then finally, adjourn that meeting.

>> So, let me move along here.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 6:*** CAC public meeting purpose.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** OK, so the purpose of this meeting is to follow up from our last CAC meeting, which took place in early January. Also, to provide additional information about the HUD approval for the CDBG-MIT Action Plan and connect on those next steps and discuss the implementation updates from the CDBG-Mitigation program activities, for which there have been some good substantial traction/activity on those. And then lastly, to provide some updates regarding the HRP program.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 7:*** Recap from the January 2023 CAC public meeting.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** And so, as a recap from our last January meeting, so in that meeting, we discussed NCORR's CDBG-MIT Substantial Action Plan Amendment and the newly incorporated, or the then newly incorporated, programmatic and policy updates. And then we also discussed the Substantial Action Plan Amendment process, which included the public comment period in response to the CDBG-Mitigation updated proposed changes and those comments then incorporated into the final draft of the Action Plan as part of the submission process to HUD – the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

>> As we, and as a reminder for folks, NCORR held a 45-day public comment period from Dec. 9, 2022 to Jan. 23, 2023. We received public comments, unfortunately those public comments, all related to Hurricane Matthew and/or Hurricane Florence, and their respective action plans.

>> And so those comments were then routed to their respective action plans and the ones that they corresponded to.

>> And then lastly, just as a reminder, on Jan. 10, we held the virtual CAC meeting and we received additional feedback obviously including the importance of continued community engagement.

>> So, moving forward here.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 8:*** Information on the HUD Action Plan approval process for CDBG-MIT.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** So just to provide some context here, since our meeting in January, so once NCORR responded and incorporated the public comments that were received into the final versions of the CDBG-Mitigation and the Hurricane Florence and Hurricane Matthew CDBG-DR Substantial Action Plan Amendments, they were submitted to HUD on Feb. 9, 2023.

>> HUD then reviewed and approved all three of those SAPAs, as they're known in short.

>> And their review process lasted from Feb. 9, 2023 through March 30, 2023. They didn't have additional comments or feedback, which is a rare, but awesome thing, not only for NCORR, but more importantly for all communities impacted in North Carolina. I mean, I think it really speaks to the work that we're doing and, you know, we were happy to have HUD, yeah, be a partner in

helping to get these action plans approved and further us making sure that those funds get out to impacted communities in North Carolina.

>> So, the next step that NCORR and HUD are going to be working on are to have the grant agreement signed with HUD, which then would enable the funding to become available for expenditure.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 9:*** Information on the updated CDBG-MIT allocations breakdown.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** And as a reminder from our last meeting, here's a look at the updated CDBG-Mitigation allocations breakdown, which was based on the needs assessment and identified by NCORR. We can definitely see the differences between the SAPA 3 and SAPA 4.

>> But again, it's a reminder we went through these in January and just wanted to level set. As we move through, you know, these were the proposed changes as part of moving from the third SAPA to the fourth SAPA.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 10:*** Updates on the CDBG-MIT activity for the Public Housing Restoration Fund.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** For the purposes, at this point, I want to just jump in and we're going to start just with some updates about each of the program activities. So, I'm going to just do some level setting for each of the CDBG-MIT activities and then I'm going to hand it off to the respective program activity leads for them to provide their updates.

>> So, the following mitigation activities were relocated from CDBG-DR Matthew and Florence Action Plans and incorporate into the Mitigation Action Plans and into the fourth Substantial Action Plan Amendment.

>> So first, the Public Housing Restoration Fund is rehabilitating and repairing public housing authority (PHA) properties that were negatively impacted from Hurricanes Matthew and Florence. The priority targets from this program funding are PHAs located in the HUD-defined most impacted and distressed counties. And the current allocation amount was \$36.2 million.

>> And I'm going to...Now, sorry, just trying to click through. Here we go. So now I'd like to hand it over to Michele Wiggins – she's our housing opportunities manager – to provide some implementation updates on the Public Housing Restoration Fund and speak to the program, some updates on that end. So, Michele, yeah, feel free to jump on.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 11:*** Implementation updates for the Public Housing Restoration Fund.

>> **Michele Wiggins:** Thanks, Edgar. Yep, I will just do a little bit of updating on our implementation updates, and we have a few to share with you. In regard to the Public Housing Restoration Fund, we are working on rounds one and two of funding and are well underway.

>> For the housing that's under construction phase currently, the Wilson Housing Authority has a 32-unit project and they're approximately 95% complete and looking to be completed soon.

The Housing Authority of the City of Lumberton has an administrative building that is currently undergoing construction as well as approximately 65% complete.

>> In the planning phase, we have the Lumberton Housing Authority's Hilton Heights-Myers Park replacement housing project, which is 72 units, and the Fayetteville Metro Housing Authority that is in the planning phase for a community center as well.

>> We have several projects in the environmental review phase and that includes the Princeville Housing Authority replacement housing project with 50 units and the Wilmington Housing Authority for a scattered site mold removal and rehabilitation project that covers 41 units, with both of those projects in different parts of the environmental review process.

>> You can go to the next slide.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 12:*** Implementation updates (continued) for the Public Housing Restoration Fund.

>> **Michele Wiggins:** Thank you. And then in moving forward later into 2023, we're looking at three housing projects that are slated to be bid out for construction by the end of the year.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** Awesome. Thank you, Michele.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 13:*** Updates on the CDBG-MIT activity for the Infrastructure Recovery Program.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** Next, we have up the Infrastructure Recovery Program. It's repairing, replacing, rebuilding and making more resilient public facilities that were damaged by Hurricanes Matthew and Florence. So, the infrastructure Recovery Program identifies over 80% of program funds that will be set aside or that are set aside for services within the most impacted and distressed counties. Again, the primary focus of the outcomes is to demonstrate the improvements to low- and moderate-income, or LMI, communities and the most impacted and distressed areas specifically in the context of their lifelines.

>> And so, the current allocation for that is \$18 million.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 14:*** Implementation updates for the Infrastructure Recovery Program.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** So, I'm going to hand it over now to Bill Blankenship – he's our subject matter expert and project manager—to provide some implementation updates on the Infrastructure Recovery Program. So, Bill, if you're on, please feel free to jump on.

>> **Bill Blankenship:** I am, thank you.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** Thank you, sir.

>> **Bill Blankenship:** We've had a lot of movement on infrastructure projects over the last few quarters. Primarily, in Bladen County, we have a stormwater drainage project study going on for seven distinct communities. You know, include comprehensive recommendations for each of those communities and those are currently being finalized at this time. We expect that to be done in the next quarter.

- >> In Nash County, we completed a stormwater drainage project in the town of Nashville along Elm Street. It covers about 2,400 linear feet of drainage infrastructure. That project is currently going through closeout, and we'll have that wrapped up in the next quarter.
- >> In the city of Fayetteville, we are involved in rehabbing a building as an adult daycare center. It'll primarily serve homeless populations in the city of Fayetteville. It'll provide medical and dental care, access to job resources. There'll be some food preparation element and operation as an emergency shelter in case it's needed. That construction is underway, and it is about 60% complete right now and we expect that to be done in quarter three of 2023.
- >> In Robeson County, we have nine projects ongoing and Robeson County right now. Most recently we have let out bids in the towns of Parkton, in Maxton and in Fairmont. Parkton and Maxton are generator projects. Maxton is currently in bid, Parkton is currently undergoing the contract consent phase. In Fairmont, we have a 450,000-gallon effluent tank project. It's to conduct repairs and rehab the tank to prevent spillage in the future. It's going to keep the tank from failing and reduce the threat of contaminating potable water resources and environmental resources in the area. And that project has been bid, it actually came in at about the money we were expecting it to come in at and is currently under contract review.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 15:*** Implementation updates (continued) for the Infrastructure Recovery Program.

- >> **Bill Blankenship:** Moving forward through 2023. We have a project in the town of Princeville to make improvements to their levy system, the floodgates and their levy system, that's expected to be out in bid this month.
- >> In Duplin County, within the town of Magnolia, you have a demolition of a public building to be demolished and that'll be out for bid next quarter.
- >> And then in Robeson County, the next projects we expect to bid out in the next quarter will be a stormwater drainage project in Pembroke and another stormwater drainage project in the town is St. Pauls.
- >> **Edgar Gomez:** Thanks very much, Bill. I'm going to jump over here.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 16:*** Implementation Updates for the Strategic Buyout Program.

- >> **Edgar Gomez:** Alright, awesome. So, I'd like to now hand it over to Maggie Battaglin, our director of mitigation, to provide some implementation updates on the Strategic Buyout Program. So, Maggie, if you're on, which I believe you are, please feel free to jump in.
- >> **Maggie Battaglin:** Thank you so much. Good morning, can you all hear me?
- >> **Edgar Gomez:** Yep, can hear you loud and clear.
- >> **Maggie Battaglin:** Fantastic. OK, so these are some updates. We've had a really busy beginning of the year when it comes to the Strategic Buyout Program. We are continuing to expand our program into areas that are at risk for future damage. Last night at their Board of Commissioners meeting, Pender County agreed to expand this program, so it is something that we're actively doing. We look for concentrated areas, that we call "buyout zones," to focus our program in.

>> And since the beginning of this year, we actually have also completed our first four closings. We had two in Goldsboro, one in Robeson County and one in Whiteville. These pictures on the right of the slide show the applicants that we purchased our first property from. The picture at the bottom is the house that we purchased, and the picture up at the top is the house that they moved to. So, we were very excited to finally meet that milestone. Next slide, please.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 17:*** Implementation updates (continued) for the Strategic Buyout Program.

- >> **Maggie Battaglin:** This is an overview of our active portfolio. We have 176 active applications within our program.
- >> We've made a lot of really incredible progress frankly in the last, in the last, since the beginning of the year. So, we have currently 51 appraisals that are in progress. That means that they're somewhere in between us scheduling them and the appraisal being submitted back to the program. And we have 90 appraisals that have been completed since January of 2023. So, that in total is about 140 appraisals compared to five that we had done previous to that.
- >> For boundary surveys, we have 32 that are currently in progress and 109 that had been completed, which is compared to six under previous to that. We have five offers accepted. So, we have one closing that's pending and then as I stated on the earlier side, we do have four closings that were completed. Next slide, please.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 18:*** Implementation updates (continued) for the Strategic Buyout Program.

- >> **Maggie Battaglin:** And looking forward to the rest of 2023. We are, you know, continuing to expand the program in other areas that are looking for assistance with buyouts, and we are really looking forward to completing more of these closings for our applicants.
- >> **Edgar Gomez:** Thanks so much, Maggie. And yeah, lots of great work there.
- >> Yeah, So, sorry, just moving things along.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 19:*** Information on CDBG-MIT planning activities.

- >> **Edgar Gomez:** So again, just wanted to touch also base on the planning portion of the work that we've done. So, the increased resilience planning efforts added funding for planning activities that allowed for improve resilience and mitigation efforts, continued coordination with local and regional entities and allowed for sufficient support to plan for the mitigation needs of impacted communities.
- >> The planning efforts' support continues for projects identified by the State Disaster Recovery Task Force's Recovery Support Function, also known as an RSF, subcommittees and it's coordinating agencies such as North Carolina's Department of Environmental Quality, or DEQ; North Carolina Emergency Management and North Carolina Department of Transportation.
- >> NCORR's work with North Carolina State University's Coastal Dynamics Design Lab continues as they help create innovative, sustainable, adaptable and resilient design solutions

to address the environmental and human needs of impacted communities in the state of North Carolina.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 20:*** Implementation updates for CDBG-MIT planning activities.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** Yes, so moving forward into 2023, the Planning Program continues to develop, currently NCORR in partnership with the North Carolina Coastal Dynamics Design Lab, also known as CDDL, continues its planning work. It's completing the City of Whiteville's floodprint mapping. It also, it's continuing the Goldsboro and Coharie Tribe floodprint mapping efforts as well. It's entered into new agreements with the additional communities in Eastern North Carolina and finally has expanded its planning work into Haywood County as a result of Tropical Storm Fred.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 21:*** Updates on the Homeowner Recovery Program.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** So, I'd now like to see if I could have, for the purposes of the Homeowner Recovery Program updates, see if we have Jeff Royal on the call to provide some updates.

>> And if not, I'm happy also to jump on and take those on as well.

>> **Teri Riddle:** Edgar, I don't believe he's on this. This is Teri.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** Gotcha, OK, thanks Teri. So yeah, in regard to the topics, so like I mentioned, we're going to touch base on the Homeowner Recovery Program updates. And so, the following are some high-level points about the HRP as its own for review.

>> So, applications for the Homeowner Recovery Program officially closed April 21, 2023. And as of April 28, there are 4,981 active applications for assistance in the Homeowner Recovery Program, of which 59 counties are represented in the active application pool.

>> Continued areas of focus for the Homeowner Recovery Program include Robeson, Columbus, Bladen, Pender and Onslow Counties.

>> And so, ReBuild NC's focusing on quickly vetting the remaining applications for assistance, streamlining the environmental review process and increasing contractor capacity to complete work.

>> Give me one moment folks.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 22:*** Overview of the Homeowner Recovery Program application statuses and counts.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** And so, on this slide, we have a quick overview into the HRP application statuses and application counts for each of those statuses.

>> And, as you can see, NCORR's continuing to see improved processing of the applications and will continue to work towards accurate and effective progress. And then additionally, the closure of the application process was accompanied by social media and website updates, as well as broad circulating press releases.



>> So, we had a lot of interest in the final days of the program application process and set a record application receipt in the final few days that the applications were open. So there has been a lot of updates and a lot of progress on the HRP side.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 23:*** Images of a completed Homeowner Recovery Program reconstruction project.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** And so, the following slides provide additional visibility into the HRP projects across the reconstructed modular and mobile home unit replacement homes for our participating applicants. And so, here we can see a reconstruction and elevation project, specifically in the context of Wayne County.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 24:*** Images of a completed Homeowner Recovery Program modular home project.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** Following forward, we have, this is an example of a modular elevation in Robeson County.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 25:*** Images of a completed Homeowner Recovery Program MHU replacement project.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** And lastly, here we have an MHU replacement project in the county of Bladen.

***Descriptive text for the Slide 26:*** Call for questions from meeting participants.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** And so, yeah, I guess at the moment, I want to open it up potentially for any questions that might come through or that the Committee members might have specifically to what we covered.

>> So yeah, I believe folks have, the committee members have, the ability to unmute themselves. So yeah, feel free to anybody on the Citizen Advisory Community, sorry, Citizen Advisory Committee, to jump on and ask any questions related to what we presented.

>> **Laressa Witt:** Hello, this is Laressa Witt with Alliance Health. I was really impressed with those numbers where, with the buyouts. Are those numbers or people that from Mathew or Florence? Because those seem like, it seemed like, there wasn't much movement until this year. Is that correct?

>> **Maggie Battaglin:** I can answer.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** I can open that up to, yeah, thanks, Maggie. I was just going to hand it over to you.

>> **Maggie Battaglin:** I can take that. So, yeah, our buyouts are funded by a grant that doesn't necessarily explicitly address either Florence or Matthew. It's sort of is more neutral and looks

forward, but the areas were impacted mostly by Matthew and Florence, and that's why we got the money that we are using for this program.

>> I think that we've, you know, just experienced some changes over the last year that have really helped us hit the ground running with the program, and so we're really excited by the movement that we've seen and hope that we can do a lot of closings really quickly.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** Thanks, Maggie. And thank you for your question, Laressa.

>> **Nicholas Eze:** This is Nicholas. Are the updates available for us to download and peruse?

>> **Edgar Gomez:** Hey Nicholas, in regards, sorry, can you repeat the question? I just want to confirm. Is what available to download and peruse?

>> **Nicholas Eze:** Yeah, I mean this, the recent updates. Are they available for us to download it.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** The presentation, yeah. If it's specifically the slide deck, yeah, this is going to be available on the NCORR website for you to be able to look at, yes. And as you mentioned, just have an opportunity to further, yeah, look in on.

>> **Nicholas Eze:** Thank you very much.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** You're very welcome, sir.

>> **Lisa Williams:** Hi, everybody, this is Lisa Williams. I'm sorry I was late. I had some trouble with the passcode, but I'm in, thank you. Sorry.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** Thanks Lisa for joining. Sorry that you had issues with the passcode.

>> **Lisa Williams:** No problem.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** Yeah, sometimes these WebEx meetings, as some of you that were there for the January one may know, don't cooperate always. So, thank you for joining.

>> **Lisa Williams:** And I'm driving. So, if I don't, if I don't participate in the chat too much, I'm listening in.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** Thank you, we, yeah, we're on the question portion of the meeting and also, yes, please drive safely as yeah, as you're on, but thank you for joining.

>> I certainly want to open it up also if there's any additional questions or comments from the, from the committee members.

>> Just checking in on the chat as well and seeing if anything's in there. Don't see anything as of yet.

>> And if folks don't have, I'm going to, you know, I'll stay on for several minutes just to just check in and make sure that there are no additional questions, but certainly appreciate any, you know, any, any one of them, any, one of the committee members like I said to jump in and if not, then we can, if there's no further comments in a little bit, a couple minutes, then we can certainly close out.

>> I certainly want to say, thank you to those who joined and to the members that participated or folks who jumped on, not only the Citizen Advisory Committee members, but also folks who joined the meeting as well.

>> **Lisa Williams:** Just curious, is it, was the meeting recorded? If I were to go back and see the first part that I missed.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** Yes, I believe it was. Yes, Lisa.

>> **Lisa Williams:** OK, great, thank you.

>> **Edgar Gomez:** Absolutely.

>> OK.

>> Well, if nobody has any questions. It seems like, yeah. I do love a nice awkward pause here and there, but yeah, I'll, I can close out the meeting.

>> We don't have anything in the chat either.

>> Again, just wanted to reiterate, thank you, folks for joining. Thank you to the committee members that have joined and yeah, the recording of this meeting will be available as well as the slide deck script both in English and in Spanish shortly on the NCORR website.

>> So yeah, if there's nothing else, I just want to say thank you again and we can close out the meeting. I hope everybody has a good rest of their day.

>> **Joshua Dick**: Thank you.

>> **Edgar Gomez**: Thank you all.

>> **Bill Blankenship**: Thank you.

>> **Laressa Witt**: Thank you.

>> **Edgar Gomez**: Thank you both. Thank you.