

**North Carolina State Disaster Recovery Task Force
Housing Recovery Support Function (RSF 8) Meeting**

WebEx Teleconference

August 18, 2020

10:00am – 12:00pm

Meeting Minutes

[In attendance \(by teleconference\)](#)

Lead: Samuel Gunter, NC Housing Coalition

Staff: Amanda Martin and Ruseena Johnson, North Carolina Office of Recovery and Resiliency (NCORR)

Lesley Albritton, Legal Aid of North Carolina

Tom Anderson, NC League of Municipalities (NCLM)

Pamela Atwood, NC Housing Coalition

Nancy Bloebaum, NC Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA)

Tracey Colores, NCORR

PJ Connelly, OSBM

Carlotta Dixon, NC Division of Health and Human Services

Ehren Dohler, NC Coalition to End Homelessness

Scott Farmer, NCHFA

Laura Hogshead, NCORR

Haley Pfeiffer Haynes, NCORR

Jason Gray, NC Rural Center

Joel Groce, NC Community Action Association

Curtis Hill, Disability Rights of NC

David Musick, NC FEMA

Mike Patterson, Salvation Army

Christopher Posey, NCORR

Solomon Radcliffe, US Dept of Agriculture Rural Development (USDA RD)

Bill Rowe, NC Justice Center

Elizabeth Savage, Legal Aid of North Carolina

George Vital, USDA RD

Byron Waters, USDA RD

Marqueta Welton, NC Department of Administration

Erin Wynia, NCLM

[Welcome, Introductions, and Overview of Agenda](#)

A. Martin and S. Gunter provided a brief introduction and agenda overview. The agenda for the meeting included updates about ReBuild NC, the Community Development Block Grant-Coronavirus Program (CDBG-CV), and member agencies' housing recovery efforts during the pandemic.

[ReBuild NC Program Updates – Laura Hogshead](#)

L. Hogshead provided an update on ReBuild NC. ReBuild NC has received 1,948 applications for Hurricane Florence funds from the date of launch, June 15, 2020, through August 17, 2020. ReBuild is working diligently to push new and in-progress applicants through the application cycle and the program. ReBuild applicants are benefitting from some recent changes in how the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) deals with duplication of benefits.

In addition to processing applications, ReBuild NC has completed construction of 420 homes, with another 200 homes in construction and an order of 70 mobile homes (MHUs) pending.

The ReBuild Buyout Program is now active. The program currently has 91 applicants.

NCORR has used the Housing RSF recommendations to develop the Small Rental Assistance and Affordable Housing Development programs. NCORR also took the Housing RSF recommendation to develop a construction trades workforce training program. NCORR is planning to implement that program through a partnership with community colleges.

[CDBG-CV Updates – Laura Hogshead](#)

NC Department of Commerce is handling the first tranche of CDBG-CV. Their program is for non-entitlement communities and the emphasis is on rental and utility assistance programs. NCORR will handle the second and third tranches through the same state-centric approach that they are using for CDBG-DR – that is, individual household applicants will apply directly to the state program. The NCORR program will provide rental and utility assistance for up to six months, including paying arrearages. Utility arrearages and assistance can be paid to both public and private utilities. NCORR is coordinating with cities and counties that run their own rental assistance programs.

Comments from RSF members: League of Municipalities estimates a loss of \$90 million for local government via public utilities by the end of this calendar year, and \$175 million by the middle of next year. This anticipated impact is due to both nonpayment of bills and the economic downturn. This deficit may threaten the viability of these communities overall and their ability to remain financially solvent.

DHHS also provided an update on Back at Home / ESG funding:

DHHS is in the process of training selected agencies on ESG funding. They are also working to ensure that all of the counties have Back-at-Home coverage. Distribution of funds will be done in two phases. The goals for the funding is to reduce shelter censuses, get people off the streets and de-concentrate hotel programs. They are working to have 2-1-1 do centralized intake for the state by late August.

[Discussion of How Coronavirus Has Impacted Individual Agencies - All](#)

Member agencies shared updates on how Covid-19 has impacted their individual programs and/or what they are doing with respect to Covid-19 response and recovery. The discussion is summarized below:

- S. Farmer, NCHFA: NCHFA is providing rental assistance and some mortgage assistance as well. Most lenders are working with mortgage-holders to provide forbearance. Many homeowners are making their payments despite being approved for forbearance.

- C. Dixon, DHHS: DHHS' program flexibilities, like waivers of certain requirements, have been extended, from child welfare programs to economic and social services, low-income energy assistance program, the crisis intervention program and more. Utilities are being paid up to \$600. SNAP recipients' recertification periods have been waived since March 2020. Waivers have been extended for child support, court appearances, visitations, and other requirements until the end of August. DHSS has put in a request for waivers to be extended to September 11 to match the state's Phase 2 extension. In regards to Isaias, DHHS has have been assisting with 29 impacted families in Bertie County. They are also advocating at HUD for public housing residents that were impacted by Isaias.
- E. Wynia, League of Municipalities: The League is doing a federal advocacy push to influence congressional delegation and state legislators to get additional dollars into people's hands for rent and utility assistance. She will get the League's projections of fiscal impact across the state to S. Gunter for distribution throughout the RSF.
- C. Hill, Disability Rights: Biggest challenge that Disability Rights is seeing right now is that clients cannot continue to supplement their income through work like babysitting due to Covid. This is ultimately resulting in longer food lines and greater need of community or government support.
- J. Gray, Rural Center and Thread Capital: Rural Center is running its Rapid Response Loan Program, a partnership with the General Assembly through Golden Leaf Foundation. Thread Capital is working diligently to get funds out to urban and rural communities. The Rural Center is looking forward to beginning a 2-year project with NCORR focused on building local and regional resilience strategies.
- E. Savage, Legal Aid: In addition to casework, Legal Aid is doing a push on digital outreach and communications to help with disaster recovery related needs.
- J. Groce, Community Action Agencies: Agencies working on weatherization are following Covid-19 protection guidelines as much as possible. The need is greater than the funding that is available.
- B. Waters, USDA Rural Development (RD): USDA has additional funds for single-family housing program, needs more for multifamily. Other USDA RD programs are doing well, with more money being distributed than ever before.
- M. Paterson, Salvation Army: Salvation Army is continuing to address unmet needs.
- S. Gunter and P. Atwood, Housing Coalition: Housing Coalition is working on House Bill 1200. The bill itself does not need to be passed but its provisions need to be passed, even if they are included in other bills that address Covid-19 impact. Housing Coalition is also partnering with the North Carolina Realtors and the North Carolina Realtors Housing Foundation to distribute a \$200,000 fund to help individuals with rent and mortgage payments. The Realtors want to serve people in every county throughout the state. Housing Coalition has a list of counties where they do not have a strong coverage for potential recipients, so if you know folks that need a month of rent/mortgage paid, let Housing Coalition know. Housing Coalition is also thinking about capacity at housing counseling agencies; home-buying education classes have not slowed down, there may even be a bit of an uptick. The big question is eviction for renters, and we are trying to get good data. Finally, there is an opening at the Housing Coalition for the Director of Organizing.

- PJ Connelly, Hometown Strong: Hometown Strong is working with many more counties than before the pandemic. Many of local government partners are reluctant to plan too far ahead as they believe that the pandemic is not as bad as has been reported. In addition, many believe that if they could just open their businesses, the economic impact of Covid would be resolved. Hometown Strong is also working with DHSS on farmworker housing and to ensure that historically marginalized populations are being tested for Covid. The biggest area of their work is dealing with remote learning, working in partnership with NC Business Committee for Education. So far, they have worked with 20 counties to assess remote learning needs, provide outdoor A/V for community park-and-learns, and funding for hotspots for individual homes.

Next Steps

Next meeting: A. Martin will send out information for next meeting date.