

Notes from Statewide Multifamily Housing Industry on Hurricane Helene Relief **Tuesday, January 14, 2025**

Government Update (Jon)

- The government's recommendation received in December includes a needs assessment with a housing section based on FEMA filings and census data.
- A link to the government recommendation has been shared by John.
- The status of an on-the-ground assessment remains unclear.

Updates from Bryan

- Residential Damage in Buncombe County:
 - 9,234 residential units damaged.
 - 331 units destroyed.
 - 8,300 units require repairs to be safe and livable (data from County Manager Avril Pinder).
- FEMA Support:
 - Over 2,000 households in FEMA-paid hotels and motels.
 - 700+ families receiving FEMA rental assistance (\$2.3 million provided so far).
 - 5 families using FEMA's direct lease program.
 - 147 households approved for direct housing through FEMA.
 - Only 15% of households in the affected region have applied for FEMA individual and household assistance (The Washington Post analysis).
 - Twice as many households applied for FEMA help in Georgia and South Carolina compared to North Carolina.
- Transitional Sheltering Assistance:
 - As of December, 1,403 Buncombe County households were residing in 37 hotels through this program, which ends on January 11, 2025.
- Temporary FEMA Vouchers:
 - Senator Tillis successfully advocated for an extension of temporary FEMA vouchers.
 - FEMA is working on temporary structure housing in rural areas.

Property and Rental Assistance Updates

- Tim from Asheville:
 - Reported a couple of residents moving out due to job-related reasons; units were quickly filled.
- Rental Assistance and Evictions:
 - Evictions resumed once operations reopened.
 - A church providing rental assistance lacks a structured program and is unfamiliar with housing processes. Jon and Bryan are organizing a meeting with them to discuss policies and funding concerns.
 - GCAA is currently providing a maximum of \$1,000 per household in rental assistance.
 - GCAA's board is considering expanding the fund to management companies in affected areas.
 - FEMA's rental assistance cap aligns with market rates.
 - Large management companies have participated in church-funded rental assistance efforts.

Industry and Housing Updates

- Hospitality and Tourism:
 - Industry recovery is still uncertain. Many who left are unlikely to return, while others are attempting to stay.
- Vacancy Rates:
 - Tina from Apartments.com reported an 8.5% vacancy rate in Asheville.
- **FEMA Contracts:**
 - Laura Williamson (ACRS):
 - Her company did not receive the FEMA contract; it was awarded to LEMA Charlie in California.
 - LEMA Charlie's efforts have reportedly helped 15 families in Asheville with long-term housing for two years.
- **Homeless Housing Program:**
 - Amanda Williams (BCS Holdings):
 - Mentioned a program offering to house homeless individuals by covering one-year leases in their names.
 - Will provide further details to Bryan.

AAWNC is resuming regular meetings and classes

Meeting Logistics

- Monthly calls will be scheduled moving forward.
- Additional meetings may be held if needed.