

State Disaster Recovery Task Force
Housing Recovery Support Function Meeting
State Emergency Operations Center, Situation Room
August 21, 2019
10:00am – 12:00pm

Meeting Minutes

Lead: Samuel Gunter, NC Housing Coalition

Staff: Amanda Martin, NCORR

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

A brief overview of the meeting was provided.

[Update on NCORR](#)

Laura Hogshead: Gave general background of NCORR's formation. Currently spending money from Matthew, but not Florence money yet. Currently in homeowner repair and reconstruction for Matthew. Has been a long time coming. Just now sending out award letters. Now standing up buyout program and small rental program (program for landlords that lost housing stock in storm). Two most important goals are to get people out of harms way and build more affordable housing. Just signed agreements with HFA for two affordable housing developments. We must spend 80% of money in the HUD-designated Most Impacted and Distressed counties.

Q: Can you speak to dollar amount?

LH: 616 awards outside Robeson, Robeson has its own contract. Of \$236M, we have committed \$91M. Homeowners have \$33M committed, rest to HFA, local govns. Was only \$7M when NCORR took over in January.

Q: What do you see as barriers to getting more money out faster?

LH: Only barrier is getting the construction done. Need to manage expectations because HUD doesn't count numbers until the construction is done.

Buyout is \$25M, Small rental is \$18M. Buyout is a hard conversation and hard to execute. Will take a little while to get those dollars committed. Small rental will probably go faster. Also more infrastructure to come. Need to add together a bunch of different funding sources.

[Discussion of Challenges and Opportunities](#)

Issues heard at last meeting:

- Recovery of rental housing
- Uninsured Multifamily devel

- Universal Design
- Finding available rentals for survivors
- General Housing shortage
- Accessibility issues with travel trailers
- Long lag time in assistance
- Can we have one intake form for multiple programs?
- Need more caseworkers
- Complex heirs properties issues
- Need workforce that can do housing counseling, navigation
- Eroded personnel and organizational infrastructure for providing affordable housing in state
- How to help survivors that need small amounts of money to accept their larger award
- How to set up disaster rental assistance before next disaster
- Predatory landlords esp in mobile home parks.

New issues and deeper discussion:

- Discussed opportunities zones. But not hearing good examples of them. Not sure what the benefit is. HUD representative will follow up with examples
- Discussion that zoning is an issue. Being used as a weapon. Raised issue of Oregon limiting zoning and Minneapolis getting rid of single family zoning. Challenge is that everyone wants affordable housing, they just don't want it next to them.
 - NC Fair Housing Law does prevent discrimination on basis of AMI. This is an opp because this isn't in fed law.
 - Issue with zoning against multifamily housing. We need to have that communicated that it's not okay.
 - Some communities refusing NCORR/CDBG multifamily assistance because they don't want multifamily, want parking downtown, etc.
 - State could play a role in advising local communities re criteria for rebuilding. Could report to AG's office if local govs are doing something illegal. Potentially faster solution than people suing.
- Other routes to affordable housing?
 - Could also use vouchers or rental assistance.
- Issue that people were deemed ineligible for CDBG-DR because went ahead and did work themselves or through other means. How do we get people into safer housing without getting them ineligible for CDBG-DR?
 - For people who get CDBG-DR awards. Once they get their enviro review done, they can do work as long as it is considered an "emergency repair." So can get them in safer housing—get rid of mold, etc. but don't do anything permanent. HUDs intent is good—they don't want anyone to do anything that would harm environmental review before homeowner gets HUD money. But the letter that went out wasn't very clear, raised a lot of alarm bells.

[Longer discussion re how to make it more clear what work can be done as emergency repairs. Point also made that need to give people more info re how long this process can take.]

- Raised issue of challenges with lack of clear title.
- Discussed availability of travel trailers. Very helpful if can move people out of the home while work is being done. Also, due to lack of contractors, can't get work done quickly and households have expended fund on renting. Trying to find solutions to these problems.
- Talked about heirs property issues. Solutions challenging because very individualized to clients and property involved. No universal solution. Needs to be a shift in the programs re what is sufficient to show ownership, rather than continuing with same requirements. State used to be more generous with what it would accept as proof of ownership. Unrealistic to expect clear title.
 - Can we learn from SC or GA re how they've handled it?
 - Also Puerto Rico has had this issue. Came up with solution there that seemed creative. And Houston?
- Bladen –people don't have the info. Don't know the assistance that's available. For some reason the message isn't getting out there. Maybe not using the right language? Tell people that they need to apply to FEMA, even if get denied, because then can apply for next thing. Lots of people are missing out.
 - Needs to be not only the right message, but the right messenger. Someone people trust.
- Question: Can you explain State Action plan development process?
 - Laura Hogshead: Explained process. Part of it is the unmet needs discussion. Action needs to be tied to unmet needs analysis. Need to write one for the Matt mitigation money and one for the Flo money. Another challenge is that \$168M is not that much money. Won't solve all the problems
 - **HUD rep:** mentions that state gets other CDBG money—could use that for DR work, even though it's not designated for DR.
 - State has had a complicated relationship with CDBG money—has been shifted around a lot and no longer funds housing.
 - **Comment:** Don't have a good mechanism for incentivizing local aff housing development at the state level.
 - Issue some of the COGs are too small. Don't have capacity to manage funds, projects.
- Issue of sales tax on labor for home repair that does not apply remodeling. It is a seven percent tax. If could get this waived in disaster recovery, would be good.
- Need law that when people qualify for an apartment, in disaster, can't be turned away because they have a voucher.
 - problem is landlords don't want the paperwork that comes with accepting a voucher. Maybe those funds/paperwork could be expedited in a disaster. If we can make that part easier, then maybe more landlords would accept more of these. Would love to hear of a streamlined process for vouchers.
 - **HUD rep:** Thinks the process is streamlined, so would like to know what the issues are.
 - the front end, inspections, is the hard part.
 - Inspections, approvals, the criteria, all of that is up to the local housing authority. Definitely an issue that some of the local govts don't have enough capacity to review the applications and do the inspections. HUD would like to work with these local govts. NC is

below 90% occupancy on HUD funded projects. This is low. Why isn't occupancy rate higher? New Bern has 85% occupancy rate—why aren't more of those houses occupied. HUD likes to see 95% occupancy.

Prioritization

AM: Amanda asks everyone to use their four dot stickers to vote on what are the four issues they'd like to see prioritized for the group. Reads through the various challenges. Asks everyone to vote as they leave/mingle.

PRIORITIZATION VOTE: Which issues to focus on this fall

- 11 Workforce development: construction, inspection labor; section 3 implementation; undersubscribed programs**
- 7 Affordable housing for very low income**
- 7 Zoning that limits development, especially dense or multifamily housing**
- 5 How to set up disaster rental assistance before next disaster**
- 4 Can we have one intake form for multiple programs?
- 4 Complex heirs properties issues
- 4 Eroded personnel and organizational infrastructure for providing affordable housing in state
- 4 Project-based subsidies – can we layer CDBG-DR with tax credits
- 3 Need more caseworkers
- 3 Need workforce that can do housing counseling, navigation
- 3 People have vouchers and can't use them
- 2 Recovery of rental housing
- 2 Universal Design
- 2 Predatory landlords esp in mobile home parks.
- 2 Tax on repair labor – could it be waived during disaster
- 2 Improving messaging and communication to reach more people about resources available
- 1 General Housing shortage
- 1 Site control for developers
- 1 Getting occupancy rates up in HUD assisted housing
 - Uninsured Multifamily devel
 - Finding available rentals for survivors
 - Accessibility issues with travel trailers
 - Long lag time in assistance
 - How to help survivors that need small amounts of money to accept their larger award
 - Substandard housing with deferred maintenance
 - Availability of FEMA trailers and mobile homes for sale
 - Using opportunity zones
 - Rules about repairing homes before receiving CDBG awards