



City of Rocky Mount Administrative Policy

Policy: Housing Rehabilitation Matching Rebate Program

Section: Administrative Policy No. II.42

Prepared By: Cornelia L. McGee, Interim Director of Community Development

Approved By: City Council

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SECTION 1. Goals of the Program

The City of Rocky Mount's Housing Rehabilitation (Rehab) Program offers a 50/50 matching rebate for up to \$15,000 to help homeowners with the repair and rehabilitation of homes that are at least forty (40) years old. Pursuant to Rocky Mount's Housing Plan, the City Council authorized a matching rebate program to assist homeowners with the repair and rehabilitation of older structures.

SECTION 2. Purpose

The program aims to stabilize and preserve distressed residential dwellings throughout the City. Homeowners and homebuyers addressing housing conditions that pose threats to life and/or safety, accessibility, site/structural repairs, and façade improvements are eligible to participate in the program. Funding is not intended to support comprehensive rehabilitation or renovation projects. This assistance will match homeowner dollars (dollar for dollar) in the form of a matching rebate of up to \$15,000 to improve homes in the City limits of Rocky Mount. The number of homes that can be assisted is dependent on the availability of funding.

This Policy outlines assistance eligibility criteria, the applications review process, and how the repair/modification process will be managed. The City has designed this program to be fair, transparent, and consistent in its implementation.

SECTION 3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The program will be administered by the following City staff members:

- a. The Community Development Technician (CD Tech) and/or Citizen Assistance Specialist shall serve as the primary contact for questions, concerns, application intake, and program promotion. The CD Tech and/or Citizen Assistance Specialist is responsible for requesting, compiling, and filing all necessary documentation to determine eligibility. Additionally, the CD Tech handles the drafting of closing documents. The Citizen Assistance Specialist/HOME Coordinator is also responsible for assisting with the drafting of closing documents.
- b. The CD Tech requests the letters of determination for properties in the historic districts and/or flood zones from the Planning Administrator in the Development Services Department. The CD Tech also requests information from the Community Code Division about any open or outstanding Community Code actions (see section 4.1).
- c. The Housing Rehab Specialist performs both an initial assessment/inspection as well as a post-inspection once repairs have been completed.
- d. The Compliance Administrator is responsible for monitoring the program and doing the grant funding close-out which includes the verification of applicant

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- eligibility and documentation accuracy (i.e. closing documents, invoices, copies of paid receipts, and verification of payments).
- e. There shall be four (4) levels of oversight of the Housing Rehab Matching Rebate Program
 - Level 1: The Community Development Administrator shall be responsible for overseeing the CD Tech, Citizen Assistance Specialist, Housing Specialist, HOME Coordinator, and Compliance Administrator. The Community Development Administrator reviews applications execute approval/denial letters and approve all requisitions, purchase orders, and payment requests.
 - Level 2: The Community Development Director shall be responsible for the Community Development Administrator and Administrative Assistant, overseeing and signing off on all requisitions, purchase orders, and check requests.
 - Level 3: The Assistant City Manager or designee shall hear any appeals that cannot be resolved by the Director of Community Development. If the matter is still unresolved, the City Manager shall hear the matter. The decision of the City Manager is final.
 - Level 4: The City Manager shall render a final determination on any matter that is the subject of appeal.
 - f. The CD Tech is responsible for initiating requisitions for approved projects, obtaining purchase orders, and initiating payment requests for submission to the Finance Department.
 - g. The CD Tech is responsible for closing each project upon completion by obtaining final inspections reports for the project file, preparing final payment requests, and closing out purchase orders.

SECTION 4. Housing Rehab Matching Rebate Program Policy

- 4.1 The residential property must be located within the city limits of Rocky Mount, NC to receive assistance. Properties must be single-family residences or duplexes constructed at least forty (40) years ago, based on tax records. If the property is under the minimum housing code, the scope of work must satisfy ALL code violations.
- 4.2 Eligible repairs:
 - a) Replacement windows
 - b) Replacement doors
 - c) Siding repair and/or replacement
 - d) System upgrades (i.e. plumbing, electrical, and HVAC)
 - e) Roof repair and/or replacement and gutters

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- f) Water heater replacement
 - g) Lead, mold, and asbestos abatement/remediation
 - h) Exterior painting
 - i) Accessibility features for entering and exiting the home (i.e. wheelchair ramps, stair rails)
 - j) Landscaping (removal of and/or planting of trees and shrubs)
 - k) Installing grab-bars in bathrooms
 - l) Installing smoke alarms
 - m) The City will not reimburse for any appliances (such as stoves or refrigerators) other than water heaters or HVAC units.
 - n) Any cost associated with applying for a loan from a private lending institution including loan origination fees, cost of appraisal, credit reports, document preparation fees, and the like but not including principal or interest payments. This applies to homeowner-occupants only. The City's participation in loan processing costs is limited to a maximum of \$1,000.
- 4.3 Eligible applicants will be selected on a first-come, first-serve basis.
- 4.4 Properties located in the city-designated historic districts must obtain approval for proposed alterations to home exteriors from the Rocky Mount Historic Preservation Commission.
- 4.5 Homeowner assistance under this program shall be granted without regard to race, color, religion, sex, disability, familial status, or national origin under the Fair Housing Act and without regard to marital status, age, or source of income under the Equal Credit Opportunity Act. The City of Rocky Mount complies with Fair Housing and Equal Credit Opportunities as a HUD grantee. In addition, the City requires compliance with Chapter 12 of the Rocky Mount Code of Ordinances regarding fair housing.
- 4.6 The City shall match actual eligible housing rehab costs dollar for dollar with the City share not exceeding \$15,000. The homeowner shall pay all costs for the rehab upfront and the City will rebate its share to the homeowner upon completion of the project. The amount of the rebate will depend on the scope of the proposed project. If the total cost of the rehab exceeds \$30,000, the homeowner is responsible for paying any amount over this total. The rebate from the City is limited to \$15,000 maximum.
- 4.7 Homeowners shall solicit and submit two competitive bids or quotes from contractors for any component of a rehabilitation project that has a cost of \$5,000 or more. Examples of components of a rehabilitation project include re-roofing, window replacement, HVAC system replacement, as listed in section 4.2. The City's participation shall be based on the lowest qualified quote or bid.
- 4.8 Contracting for work should be done in accordance with any applicable

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permitting and inspection requirements. (Note: Building permits are not required for certain work costing less than \$15,000 provided that the work is performed in accordance with the current edition of the North Carolina State Building Code. This applies to windows and door replacement, exterior siding, exterior decks, plumbing replacement that do not change size or capacity, or replacement roofing). A responsible contractor is required to:

- a) Hold a contractor's license or other license required for the scope of work being performed issued by the State of North Carolina
- b) Have proof of valid liability and worker's compensation insurance
- c) Must be Lead Certified if painted surfaces will be disturbed
- d) Must be Asbestos Certified if asbestos materials will be disturbed
- e) Must be Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) and Lead Certified and must follow specified work practices to prevent lead contamination for work performed in homes built before 1978.

The responsible contractor must comply with the above requirements and be able to complete the work in a timely fashion (usually 60 days from contract signing). Any project not completed within this time frame, without written consent from the Housing Specialist will not receive the rebate. The Housing Rehab Specialist will issue work extensions based only on extenuating circumstances involving the homeowner or the contractor as determined by the Housing Rehab Specialist and the Director of Community Development; **Homeowners may not start work until all requirements under the Matching Rebate Program are met including an executed contract between the City of Rocky Mount and the homeowner.** Funds spent for work completed before the work write-up will not be credited as part of the homeowner's match. For rehab work performed by the homeowner, the City will rebate costs of materials used in the rehab project up to 50% of the actual documented cost subject to the \$15,000 maximum rebate limit. Rebates will be based on written receipts indicating full payment from suppliers of building materials.

- 4.9 For rehab work performed by the homeowner, the City will rebate costs of materials used in the rehab project up to 50% of the actual documented cost subject to the \$15,000 maximum rebate limit. Rebates will be based on written receipts indicating full payment for suppliers of building materials
- 4.10 No property shall be eligible for more than one (1) grant award in any given three (3) year period. Only one property, per owner, per year, will be eligible for a rebate. Owners of multiple properties may apply for only one property per fiscal year.

Corporate entities such as limited liability corporations may apply provided that entities having the same individual shown in the various entities' ownership structure are limited to one application per named individual

- 4.11 Owners of rental property must include a statement in the application indicating whether or not a tenant will be occupying the house during the rehabilitation project. If so, the owner must show the monthly rent charged as

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of the date of the application. As a condition of receiving Matching Rebate funding, the owner must agree to make no change in the rent for a period of five years following completion of the work.

If the owner states in the application that the home is vacant and will be rented as soon as the rehabilitation project is completed, the owner must agree to rent the premises to a household at 80% of the area median household income for a period of five years. The owner must sign a Promissory Note agreeing to refund the amount of the City's match in the event of non-compliance.

SECTION 5. Program Marketing

The Housing Rehab Matching Rebate Program will be advertised through all available media sources including, but not limited to: the local newspaper/radio station in Rocky Mount, Channel 19 and 13 (local cable access), City of Rocky Mount website, Facebook, Twitter, and Energy Connections Newsletter, ad posted on the Lamar digital billboard, flyers posted in the City of Rocky Mount and other local government offices, and neighborhood organization meetings. The program will be advertised and accepted until the application deadline, which will be clearly indicated on all notices.

SECTION 6. Application Process for Housing Rehab Matching Rebate Program

- 6.1 To be eligible for assistance the applicant must:
 - a) Own the home
 - b) Be current on the city and county property tax payments; current on payment of utility bills from the City; and have no liens against the property for weed abatement or improvements such as a sidewalk, curb, and gutter, or water and sewer line fees.
 - c) Provide written evidence of insurance coverage for liability, casualty, and flood damage (if located in a flood zone).
- 6.2 The application and supporting material will be collected and reviewed by the Community Development Technician and then forwarded to the Community Development Administrator for review.
- 6.3 The homeowners to be assisted will be selected on a first-come, first-serve basis. Ownership of the property will be verified. From this review, applicants meeting program requirements will be chosen accordingly. If lead remediation is required, the homeowner is responsible for relocation during remediation. Any incomplete application will be denied, and the applicant will be notified of missing material via mail. Denied applicants may submit a completely new application and the date of the new application determines their place in the application queue.
- 6.4 Approved homeowners will be provided detailed information on the matching rebate program, repair/modification standards, and the contracting procedures

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associated with their project at this informational interview.

- 6.5 The City's Housing Rehab Specialist or a firm contracted for this program, will visit homes of approved program participants and review with the homeowner the proposed renovations, repairs, or improvements.
- 6.6 After approval of the work write-up, the homeowner will sign a written agreement that will explain and govern the repair/modification process. This agreement will define the roles of the parties involved throughout the process.
- 6.7 After the agreement has been signed, a pre-construction conference will be held at the home. At this time, the homeowner and Housing Rehab Specialist or City contracted firm will discuss the details of the work to be done. Attendance by the homeowner's chosen contractor is required.
- 6.8 The contractor chosen by the homeowner will be responsible for obtaining any required building permits prior to any work beginning. Permits must be posted at the house during the entire period of construction. The Housing Rehab Specialist will closely monitor the contractor during the construction period to make sure that the work is being done according to the rehabilitation contract and in a timely manner. City inspectors will inspect applicable work for compliance with NC Building Codes. The homeowner will be responsible for protecting personal property by clearing work areas.
- 6.9 Any change orders are the responsibility of the homeowner. The City will not increase the matching rebate amount after the contract is signed.

SECTION 7. Completion and Close-Out

Upon completion of a rehab project, the homeowner shall submit:

- Documentation of all payments to contractors in the form of checks, credit card receipts, or money orders. Receipts for payments by cash are not acceptable. Payments by check, credit card, or money order must be supported by itemized receipts verifying goods and services purchased.
- Inspection reports indicating approved work from City of Rocky Mount inspectors for any work requiring city inspection permits.
- Documentation of release of any lien imposed by contractors or subcontractors.
- A certification of satisfaction is required by the homeowner.
- A written statement from the Housing Rehab Specialist certifying all work originally proposed is satisfactorily completed.
- If the house was the subject of any Community Code actions, a statement of compliance with the minimum housing code issued by the Community Code Division.

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7.2 Approvals

- A request for payment of the rebate shall be signed by the Director of the Department Community Development, submitted to the Internal Auditor for verifications, signed by the City Manager, and submitted to the Finance Department for review and payment.

SECTION 8. Appeals Process

The appeals process is designed to provide transparent, fair, and impartial resolution for all complaints, matters of conflict, and policy interpretation. The following procedures are designed to provide an avenue for the resolution of complaints and appeals.

- 8.1 During the application process, the City of Rocky Mount will respond in writing to any complaints or appeals within thirty (30) business days of receiving written comments.

If an applicant feels that his/her application was not fairly reviewed and would like to appeal the decision, he/she should contact the Community Development Director at City of Rocky Mount, P.O. Box 1180, Rocky Mount, North Carolina 27802 or 252-972-1100, within thirty (30) days of the initial decision and detail the concern in writing. The Community Development Director will recommend terms of resolution. The City Manager shall render a final determination on any matter that is the subject of appeal.

- 8.2 During the repair/modification process, if the homeowner feels that the Housing Rehab Specialist has unfairly determined that the work completed does not warrant a rebate, the homeowner should contact the Community Development Director at the City of Rocky Mount, P.O. Box 1180, Rocky Mount, North Carolina 27802 or 252-972-1100.