



City of Rocky Mount Administrative Policy

Assistance Policy: Urgent Repair Program

Section: Administrative Policy No. II.29(a)
Prepared By: Cornelia McGee, Director of Community Development
Approved By: City Council
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SECTION 1. Assistance Policy

The Urgent Repair Program is intended to assist with the rehabilitation of deteriorated homes that are owned and occupied by very low-income households. The goals of the Urgent Repair Program are:

- To alleviate housing conditions which pose an imminent threat to the life or safety of very low-income homeowners with special needs
- To provide accessibility modifications and other repairs necessary to prevent the imminent displacement of very low-income homeowners with special accessibility needs, such as frail elderly and persons with disabilities

SECTION 2. Purpose

The City of Rocky Mount has been awarded \$132,000 by the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA) under the 2023 cycle of the Urgent Repair Program (URP23). This program provides funds to assist very-low and low-income households with special needs in addressing housing conditions which pose imminent threats to their life and/or safety or to provide accessibility modifications and other repairs necessary to prevent displacement of very-low and low-income homeowners with special needs such as frail elderly and persons with disabilities. A total of 16 households will be assisted under URP23.

The Assistance Policy describes who is eligible to apply for assistance under URP23, how applications for assistance will be rated and ranked, what the form of assistance is and how the repair/modification process will be managed. The City has tried to design this URP23 project to be fair, open, and consistent with the City's approved application for funding and with NCHFA's URP Program Guidelines.

The City of Rocky Mount supplements the funding from NCHFA in the amount of \$150,000 from the General Fund to be used by the Urgent Repair Program.

***Note: The funds provided by NCHFA come from the North Carolina Housing Trust Fund and Agency funds.*

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 HOME Coordinator shall serve as the primary contact for questions, concerns, application intake and program promotion. The CD Tech and/or HOME Coordinator is responsible for requesting, compiling, and filing all necessary documentation to determine eligibility. Additionally, the CD Tech/HOME Coordinator handles the drafting and execution of closing documents. The Citizen Assistance Specialist is also responsible for assisting with the execution of closing documents.

- b. The CD Tech/HOME Coordinator 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/HOME Coordinator 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 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 Urgent Repair 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, reviewing files, executing approval/denial letters, and signing all requisitions, purchase orders, and check requests.
 - Level 2: The Director of Community Development 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 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/HOME Coordinator processes requisition-purchase orders and check requests and forwards to the Finance Department for payment.
- g. Purchasing Technician provides support for the program which includes entering vendor information and reviewing/approving purchase order requests.
- h. Accounting Technician/Accountant provides financial processing support for the program which includes reviewing contracts, reviewing purchase orders, and processing payment requests.

SECTION 4. Urgent Repair Program Policy

4.1 To be eligible for assistance under URP23 applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- must reside within the city limits of the Rocky Mount and own and occupy the home in need of repair;
- must have a household income which does not exceed 50% of the Rocky Mount MSA area median income for the household size (see income limits below);
- must have a special need (i.e. be elderly, \geq 62 years old, handicapped or disabled, a single parent with a dependent living at home, a Veteran, a large family with \geq 5 household members or a household with a child below the age of six with lead hazards in the home; and
- must have urgent repair needs, which cannot be met through other state or federally funded housing assistance programs.
- If the property is under the minimum housing code, the scope of work must satisfy all code violations.

4.2 URP23 Income Limits* for City of Rocky Mount

Number in Household	30% of Median (extremely low income)	50% of Median (very low income)
1	\$14,900	\$24,800
2	\$17,000	\$28,350
3	\$19,150	\$31,900
4	\$21,250	\$35,400
5	\$22,950	\$38,250
6	\$24,650	\$41,100
7	\$26,350	\$43,900
8	\$28,050	\$46,750

**Income limits are subject to change based on annually published HUD HOME Limits.*

4.3 Outreach Efforts of the Urgent Repair Program: The City of Rocky Mount has or will advertise or publish an article about the Urgent Repair Program in the local newspaper serving the City (the Rocky Mount Telegram), at senior centers throughout the City, on the local cable news channel, and on the City's website.

4.4 Selection of Applicants: The City has devised the following priority system to rank eligible applicants, determine which of them will be selected for assistance and in what order. Under this system applicants will receive points for falling into certain categories of special need and income. The applications will be ranked according to which receive the most points.

Priority Ranking System for City of Rocky Mount’s URP23

Special Needs (for definitions, see below)	Points
Disabled, Elderly or Veteran Head of Household (<i>62 or older</i>)	4
Disabled, Elderly, or Veteran Household Member (<i>not Head of Household</i>)	3
Single-Parent Household (<i>with one or more children in the home</i>)	3
Large Family (<i>5 or more permanent residents</i>)	2
Emergency (<i>may submit without regard to application deadlines</i>)	2
A child below the age of six with lead hazards in the home	2
Income (See Income Table above)	Points
Less than 30% of County Median Income	10
30% to 50% of County Median Income	5

Under NCHFA Program Guidelines, a minimum of 50% of households assisted must have incomes not exceeding 30% of the area median income for the household size, and no household with an income exceeding 50% of the area median income will be eligible. This guideline will be adhered to strictly and will be the primary factor in the selection of those households to be assisted under URP23.

Recipients of assistance under the URP23 will be chosen by the above criteria without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status or disability.

4.5 The definitions of special needs’ populations under URP23 are:

- *Elderly*: An individual aged 62 or older.
- *Emergency*: A situation in which a household member has an immediate threat of being evicted or removed from a home due to health or safety issues within a time frame that the program can complete a repair to stop eviction or removal. These applications will be received at any time during the funding cycle and evaluated on the ability of the program to complete the work in a timely manner that meets the goal of assisting homeowners to remain in their home.
- *Disabled*: A person who has a physical, mental or developmental disability that greatly limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment.
- *Large Family*: A large family household is composed of five or more individuals; at least four are immediate family members.
- *Head of Household*: The person or persons who own(s) the house.
- *Household Member*: Any individual who is an occupant (defined below) of the unit to be rehabilitated shall be considered a “household member” (the number of household members will be used to determine household size and all household members are subject to income verification).

- *Occupant*: An occupant is defined as any immediate family member (mother, father, spouse, son/daughter of the head of the household, regardless of the time of occupancy); or non-immediate family member who has resided in the dwelling at least 3 months prior to the submission of the family's application.
- *Single-Parent Household*: A household in which one and only one adult resides with one or more dependent children.
- *Veteran*: A person who served in active U.S. military service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.
- *Child*: A child below the age of six with lead hazards in the home.

4.6 Client Referral and Support Services: Homeowners assisted through the Urgent Repair Program may also need other services. When the Urgent Repair Program staff meet the homeowner during the work write-up process, they will discuss the resources and programs available in the City and provide pamphlets and a list of the agencies with contact information. With the homeowner's permission, a case file will be created, and a staff person will follow up with the homeowner concerning the available services in the referral network.

4.7 The City will provide assistance to homeowners selected for participation in the Program up to \$15,000. For homeowners receiving assistance with funding from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA), the amount of assistance from the NCHFA source shall not exceed \$12,000. Further, assistance provided with funding from the NCHFA shall be made in the form of a loan that will be unsecured and interest-free with the principal forgiven at the rate of \$3,000 per year until the balance is reduced to zero. The City will supplement assistance provided from the NCHFA source with a grant to make the total assistance amount up to \$15,000 if needed to accomplish the full extent of urgent repairs.

For homeowners receiving assistance with funding provided solely from the City's General Fund, the amount of assistance shall not exceed \$15,000 and shall be in the form of a grant, not a loan.

4.8 Only repairs that address imminent threats to the life and/or safety of occupants of the dwelling unit or accessibility modifications or well as correction of any minimum housing code violations will be performed under the city's URP23. It should be noted that all deficiencies in a home may not be rectified with the available funds. All work that is completed under URP23 must meet or exceed NC Residential Building Code.

4.9 The City is obligated under URP23 to ensure that quality work is done at reasonable prices and that all work is contracted through a fair, open and competitive process. To meet these requirements, the City will invite bids only from contractors who are part of an “approved contractors registry”. Approved contractors are required to:

- Hold a contractor’s license issued by the State of North Carolina
- Apply for and receive a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) #.
- Register with Central Contractor Registration (CCR).
- Must be Renovation, Repair, and Painting (RRP) certified for lead abatement and must follow specific work practices to prevent lead contamination for work performed in homes built before 1978.

Refer to the City’s Procurement and Disbursement Policy for further information. (Homeowners who know of quality rehabilitation contractors that are not on the City’s Approved Contractors Registry are welcome to invite them to apply.)

To be on the registry for Urgent Repair, contractors must meet the above requirements, and fill out an application form, listing several references and recent jobs completed. “Conditional approval” will be granted by the City. Once a contractor who has been conditionally approved and successfully completes one (1) job for the City, his or her status is upgraded to “regular approval”, meaning they will be allowed to bid on a regular basis as long as they remain in good standing.

A minimum of three approved contractors will be invited to bid on each job, and the lowest responsive and responsible bidder will be selected for the contract. “Responsive and responsible” are terms described in the Procurement and Disbursement Policy.

SECTION 5. Program Marketing

The Urgent Repair 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 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. Program Schedule

The proposed schedule for implementation of the program is as follows:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Time Period</u>
Application Period	September 5, 2023 – October 6, 2023
Application Review	Within 60 days
Performance of Urgent Repairs	January 1, 2024 – June 30, 2024
Grant Close-out	July 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024

SECTION 7. Application Process for Urgent Repair Program

- Completing an Application form: Homeowners who wish to apply for assistance may apply at any time while funds are available. Apply by contacting the Community Development Technician, at (252) 972-1357, Citizen Services Representative, at (252) 972-1354, or HOME Coordinator, at (252) 972-1147. Proof of ownership and income will be required. Those who have applied for housing assistance from the City in the past will not automatically be reconsidered. A new application will need to be submitted.
- Required documentation:
 - Proof of homeownership
 - Proof of primary residence (utility bill, address on pay stub, etc.)
 - Proof of income (pay stub, W2, etc.)
 - Picture ID and Social Security Card
 - Social Security Statements of every occupant
 - Proof both City and County taxes are current
- Preliminary inspection: The City's Housing Rehab Specialist will visit the homes of potential loan recipients to determine the need and feasibility of requested repairs/modifications.
- Screening of applicants: Applications will be rated and ranked by the City based on the priority system outlined on page 2. The households to be assisted will be selected within 60 days of receipt of application. Household income will be verified for program purposes only (information will be kept confidential). Ownership of property will be verified along with other rating factors. From this review, the (12) most qualified applicants will be chosen according to the priority system described in Section 4.4. There will also be a list of alternates as long as funds are available. Applicants not receiving notification that they were chosen, within 60 days of application submission, may contact the Community Development Administrator at (252) 972-1267 to confirm the disposition of the application.

- Applicant interviews: Approved applicants will be provided detailed information on assistance, program repair/modification standards and the contracting procedures associated with their project at this informational interview.
- Work write-up: The City's Housing Rehab Specialist will visit the home again for a more thorough inspection. All parts of the home must be made accessible for inspection, including the attic and crawlspace, if any. The owner should report any known problems such as electrical short circuits, blinking lights, roof leaks and the like. The Housing Rehab Specialist will prepare complete and detailed work specifications (known as the "work write-up"). A final cost estimate will also be prepared by the Housing Rehab Specialist and held in confidence until bidding is completed.
- Formal agreement: After approval of the work write-up, the homeowner will sign a formal agreement that will explain and govern the repair/modification process, and an explanation of the Promissory Note, which is considered a forgivable loan. This agreement will define the roles of the parties involved throughout the process.
- Bidding: The work write-up and bid documents will be sent to a minimum of three contractors on the Approved Contractors' Registry who will be given one week in which to inspect the property and prepare bid proposals. The names of the invited contractors will be supplied to the homeowner. Each will need access to those areas of the house, in which work is to be performed, in order to prepare a bid. A bid opening will be conducted at the Community Development office at a specified date and time, with all bidders and the homeowner invited to attend.
- Contractor selection: Within 48 hours of the bid opening, after review of bid breakdowns and timing factors, the winning bidder will be selected. All bidders and the homeowner will be notified of (1) the selection, (2) the amount, (3) the amount of the City's cost estimate, (4) any support or contingency costs that will be included in the loan amount, and (5) if other than the lowest bidder is selected, the specific reasons for the selection.
- Execution of loan and contract: The loan will be executed as well as the repair/modification contract prior to work beginning on the project. This contract will be between the contractor and homeowner, with the City signing as an interested third party. The City waives any project related support costs. The loan amount will never exceed \$12,000.
- Pre-construction conference: A pre-construction meeting will be held at the home. At this time, the homeowner, contractor and program representatives will be present and discuss the details of the work to be done. Starting and ending dates will be agreed upon, along with any special arrangements such as weekend or evening work hours and disposition of items to be removed from the home (such as old plumbing, etc.). If the contract has been executed, the City will issue a

"Notice to Proceed" formally instructing the contractor to commence by the agreed-upon date within 24 hours of the pre-construction meeting.

- **Construction:** The contractor will be responsible for obtaining any required building permits for the project before beginning work. The permit must be posted at the house during the entire period of construction. Program staff will closely monitor the contractor during the construction period to make sure that the work is being done according to the work write-up (which is made a part of the rehabilitation contract by reference) and in a timely fashion. Code Enforcement Officers will inspect new work for compliance with the State Building Code as required by the guidelines of URP23. The homeowner will be responsible for working with the contractor toward protecting personal property by clearing work areas as much as practicable.
- **Change Orders:** All changes to the scope of work must be reduced to writing as a contract amendment ("change order") and approved by all parties to the contract: the owner, the contractor and four representatives of the City of Rocky Mount (Housing Rehab Specialist, Community Development Administrator, Purchasing Manager, and Finance Director). If the changes require an increase in the loan amount, a loan modification stating these changes in the contract amount must be completed by the City and executed by the owner. If the changes result in a decrease in the loan amount, an estoppel informing the homeowner of these changes in the contract amount will be completed by the City and conveyed to the owner.
- **Payments to contractor:** The contractor will be paid following inspection of and satisfactory completion of all items on the work write-up and change orders, if any, as well as receipt of contractor's invoice and release of liens, signed by all or any sub-contractors employed on the job and by all material suppliers from whom materials for the job were purchased as outlined in the City's Procurement and Disbursement Policy.
- 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 is required for close-out.
- **Post-construction meeting:** Following construction the contractor and the Housing Rehab Specialist will sit down with the homeowner one last time. At this meeting the contractor will hand over all owner's manuals and warranties on equipment. The contractor and Housing Specialist will go over operating and maintenance requirements for any new equipment installed and discuss general maintenance of the home with the homeowner. The homeowner will have the opportunity to ask any final questions about the work and the loan.
- **Closeout:** Once each item outlined here in has been satisfied and the homeowner has signed a Certificate of Satisfaction, the job will be closed out (fully completed).

7.1 How do I request an application? Contact:

Department of Community Development
City Hall, 2nd Floor
PO Box 1180
Rocky Mount, NC 27802
(252) 972-1100

Or pick up an application at the City of Rocky Mount, Department of Community Development, 2nd Floor, and located at 331 S. Franklin Street, Rocky Mount, NC 27804. Applications will be available on the City website at www.rockymountnc.gov located under Community Development tab.

SECTION 8. Appeals Process

Although the application process and repair/modification guidelines are meant to be as fair as possible, the City of Rocky Mount realizes that there is still a chance that some applicants or participants may feel that they are not treated fairly. The following procedures are designed to provide an avenue for resolution of complaints and appeals.

8.1 During the application process:

- If an applicant feels that his/her application was not fairly reviewed or rated and would like to appeal the decision made about it, he/she should contact the Community Development Administrator within five (5) business days of the initial decision and detail the concern in writing. A written response by the Community Development Administrator will be made to any persons who place a complaint in writing within five (5) business days.
- If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the decision, a written appeal must be made within five (5) days of receipt of the written response from the Community Development Administrator. Appeals should be directed to the attention of the Director of Community and Business Development, City of Rocky Mount, Post Office Box 1180, Rocky Mount, NC 27802-1180.
- The Assistant City Manager 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.
- The City of Rocky Mount will respond in writing to any complaints or appeals within ten (10) business days of receiving written comments.

8.2 During the repair/modification process:

- If the homeowner feels that repairs or modifications are not being completed according to the contract, he/she must inform the contractor and the Housing Rehab Specialist.

- The Housing Rehab Specialist will inspect the work in question. If he finds that the work is not being completed according to contract, the Housing Specialist will review the contract with the contractor and ask the contractor to remedy the problem.
- If problems persist, a mediation conference between the homeowner and the contractor may be convened by the Housing Rehab Specialist and facilitated by the City's Community Development Administrator.
- Should the mediation conference fail to resolve the dispute, the Community Development Administrator will render a written final decision.
- If the Housing Specialist finds that the work is being completed according to contract, the complaint will be noted, and the Housing Rehab Specialist and the homeowner will discuss the concern and the reason for the Housing Rehab Specialist's decision.

SECTION 9. Other

- 9.1 Will the personal information provided remain confidential? Yes. All information in applicant files will remain confidential. Access to the information will be provided only to City employees who are directly involved in the program, the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency and auditors.
- 9.2 What about conflicts of interest? No officer, employee or other public official of the City, or member of the City Council, or entity contracting with the city, who exercises any functions or responsibilities with respect to URP23 shall have any interest, direct or indirect, in any contract or subcontract for work to be performed with program funding, either for themselves or those with whom they have family or business ties, during their tenure or for one year thereafter. Relatives of City employees, Council Members and others closely identified with the City, may be approved for rehabilitation assistance only upon public disclosure before the City Council and written permission from NCHFA.
- 9.3 What about favoritism? All activities under URP23, including rating and ranking applications, inviting bids, selecting contractors and resolving complaints, will be conducted in a fair, open and non-discriminatory manner, entirely without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status and disability.
- 9.4 Who can I contact about URP23? Any questions regarding any part of this application or program should be addressed to:

Community Development Administrator
Department of Community Development
City Hall, 2nd Floor
Rocky Mount, NC 27802-1180
(252) 972-1267

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These contacts will do their utmost to answer questions and inquiries in the most efficient and correct manner possible.

This Assistance Policy is adopted this 26th day of June 2023.

City Manager

ATTEST: _____, City Clerk
Kimberly Batts