

More Hurricane Florence Relief Made Available

By Administrator
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More families will soon be able to return home while they work to rebuild from Hurricane Florence thanks to an extension of a program to provide partial housing repairs. The original Sheltering and Temporary Essential Power (STEP) program implemented with funding from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) wrapped up in early April with repairs completed on more than 2,100 homes. Using state funds, North Carolina is extending the program to 202 additional single-family homes in 12 counties. The program provides partial repairs at no cost to homeowners so Hurricane Florence survivors can return to and remain in their homes while longer-term repairs continue.

“People want to be able to live in their own homes while they work to recover from Hurricane Florence,” Gov. Roy Cooper said. “We’ve expanded this program to make it possible for more North Carolina families to get home faster.”

The original STEP program provided repairs to homes with up to \$17,000 in damage. The 202 homes included in the second phase of STEP applied for the original program but had slightly more damage. North Carolina Emergency Management stepped in using state funds to include these additional homes.

Work crews from Baptists on Mission, the North Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church and four general contracting companies are currently making repairs to the 202 homes in Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Duplin, Jones, New Hanover, Onslow, Pender and Robeson counties.

Hurricane Florence survivors who still face long-term housing issues are urged to participate in the Disaster Case Management program. The state has contracted with experienced case managers who will work in conjunction with faith-based and volunteer organizations to help meet survivors’ needs.

To connect with a disaster case manager, Hurricane Florence survivors can email DCMNC@Endeavors.org or call one of two regional offices listed below:

- Residents of Anson, Bladen, Brunswick, Chatham, Columbus, Cumberland, Durham, Guilford, Harnett, Hoke, Johnston, Lee, Moore, New Hanover, Orange, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland and Union counties should call the Fayetteville office at 910-672-6175
- Residents of Beaufort, Carteret, Craven, Duplin, Greene, Hyde, Jones, Lenoir, Onslow,

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Pamlico, Pender, Pitt, Wayne and Wilson counties should call the Jacksonville office at 910-378-4913

There are additional state and federal programs which are either underway or awaiting funding to assist Hurricane Florence survivors. FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program helps eligible homeowners and local governments to rebuild, elevate or buy out flooded properties.

North Carolina is waiting for notification from Washington on another major program that will help with Hurricane Florence housing recovery, the federal Community Development Block Grant–Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In October 2018, Congress passed legislation appropriating CDBG-DR funds for Florence and several other natural disasters, but North Carolina does not yet know what share of the funds it will receive or the rules for using those funds to help with long-term recovery.

The state Department of Health and Human Services is also assisting hurricane survivors with housing solutions through its Back@Home NC program. The initiative assists families who were not eligible for FEMA assistance to transition to safe and stable housing. To date, more than 200 families have moved to permanent housing through the program.