



**BHO, Inc.**  
*Connects People to Opportunities.*

June 22, 2021

Mr. Scott Farmer, Executive Director  
North Carolina Housing Finance Agency  
P.O. Box 28066 Raleigh, NC 27611-8066  
Via Electronic Mail

Public Comments  
North Carolina Homeowner Assistance Fund

After careful review of the NC Homeowners Assistance Fund Program Summary I am amazed and dishearten that the NCHFA would not include NC Housing Counseling Agencies as part of its Marketing and Outreach plan or its Program Design. Housing Counselors have proven over and over again their value and necessity to assuring the equitable distribution of resources to those at or below 100% of AMI, the majority of the workforce in NC.

The network of counseling agencies in the past and currently play a vital role in the success of the programs geared toward struggling potential and current homeowners. They have played a vital role in the success of HHF (NC Foreclosure Prevention Fund, MPP (Mortgage Protection Program) and SHFPP (State Home Foreclosure Prevention Program) in recent years and have been a critical part of distribution of resources to homeowners in past disasters.

For homeowners who have suffered this program will offer them the ability to become current. Housing counseling helps clients experiencing delinquency prevent foreclosure and receive information to improve their housing situation going forward.

Lydia Materno stated in her public comment on June 16<sup>th</sup>, she is happy to have a job again, but it is not at her previous salary and she is not receiving child support. This scenario illustrates the need and importance of Housing Counseling Agencies. Their ability to provide information, guidance, and available resources for individuals, like Lydia, can help improve their financial situation and achieve housing stability.

With this being said, Housing Counseling Agencies should have been mentioned and included in the program design of the NC's Homeowner Assistance Fund Program. These agencies are local and have visibility in the communities they serve. They have a proven track record for homeowners' retention by providing a holistic approach to housing counseling and serving clients. These agencies provide the tools and guidance for enhancing credit scores, reducing debt, possible refinance, etc. and helps to create a stable foundation for the future.

Many of the targeted and priority clients who will seek assistance through NC's Homeowner Assistance Fund will have prior knowledge and experience with their local housing counseling agency. Homebuyers' education and counseling is a requirement for most clients utilizing USDA mortgages, down payment assistance programs, CRA programs, and Habitat for Humanity mortgage loans.

*BHO, Inc.*



**BHO, Inc.**  
*Connects People to Opportunities.*

Housing Counseling Agencies have demonstrated their ability to mobilize and positively impact client outcomes during emergency and crisis situations and have a successful track record in working with federally funded and emergency management programs.

The NC's Homeowner Assistance Fund is an opportunity to help strengthen the HUD approved counseling agencies network and provide assistance to homeowners who have been impacted. The aforementioned housing programs were successful as a result of the HUD approved housing counseling agencies participation. Housing counseling agencies collaborate with federal, state and local stakeholders in the housing industry. By utilizing an innovative triage approach which fully leverages funding and maximizes staff efficiency, these agencies are positioned to better serve those facing a financial crisis. Housing Counseling agencies help prevent foreclosures, stabilize neighborhoods, and effectuate systemic changes within the housing industry.

These agencies are a valuable resource and offer long term sustainability for distressed families in North Carolina. Therefore, they should be specifically mentioned and have a major role in the overall design of the program and service delivery.  
Humbly submitted,

Resea B. Willis  
BHO, Inc.  
*Connecting People to Resources*

***BHO connects people to Resources to take advantage of Opportunities that achieve, Wellbeing, Economic Security, and Financial Resiliency.***

***BHO, Inc.***