

# **APPLICATION GUIDELINES**

**For the 2021 cycle of the**

## **URGENT REPAIR PROGRAM (URP21)**

**NORTH CAROLINA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY**

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# Application Guidelines

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
1. Introduction.....	3
2. Background .....	4
3. Funding.....	5
4. Schedule.....	6
5. Eligible applicants.....	6
6. Eligible households.....	6
7. Eligible activities .....	6
8. Eligible forms of assistance .....	6
9. Application review and ranking process.....	7
9.1 Threshold review .....	7
9.2 Competitive ranking.....	7
9.3 Agency Board approval .....	8
9.4 Post-Approval Documentation and Funding Agreements .....	8
9.5 Funding award .....	9
10. Special Instructions to the Application.....	9
10.1 Requests for Application forms .....	9
10.2 Application deadline .....	9
10.3 Application fee.....	10
10.4 Address .....	10
10.5 Other instructions.....	10

# APPLICATION GUIDELINES

## For the Urgent Repair Program

### 1. Introduction

The North Carolina Housing Finance Agency announces the availability of funds under the Urgent Repair Program ("URP").

A total of \$4.5 million will be made available under the 2021 cycle of the Urgent Repair Program (URP21) to nonprofit organizations, local governments, and regional councils statewide who may apply for funding through a competitive application process. Applicant eligibility and ranking criteria are described under sections 5 and 9.

Last year's URP funding cycle ("URP20"), was very competitive, with 52 applicants requesting a total of over \$6.43 million. With \$4.50 million available, 37 projects in 52 counties could be funded. This program year, we expect 37 to 41 of the applicants for URP21 to receive awards.

The goals of the Urgent Repair Program are: 1) to alleviate housing conditions which pose an imminent threat to the life or safety of very low-income homeowners with special needs; and 2) 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.

The Urgent Repair Program objectives are:

- 1) To assist very low-income and low-income owner-occupant households with one or more fulltime household members with special needs (elderly  $\geq$  62 years of age, handicapped or disabled, Veteran, single-parent, large households (five or more), or households with children who have elevated blood lead levels, in all areas of the state;
- 2) To serve households with urgent repair needs that cannot be met through other state- or federally-funded housing assistance programs; and,
- 3) To enable frail elderly homeowners, and other household members with physical disabilities, to remain in their homes by providing essential accessibility modifications.

Under URP21, recipients of funds will be expected to develop and adhere to fair, open and competitive procedures for the procurement of goods and services and for the selection of Program beneficiaries. These Application Guidelines provide a brief overview of the Program. Additional information on Program and application requirements is contained in the accompanying Application for Funding.

## 2. Background

In 1994 the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (the Agency) initiated the Urgent Repair Program ("URP94") as a one-year demonstration program with funds from the North Carolina Housing Trust Fund. The program was approved by the North Carolina Housing Partnership in response to the frequently expressed need for repair funding to respond to emergency situations and prevent displacement without having to bring a whole house up to code.

A total of \$1 million of URP94 funds was allocated to sub-contractors under the U.S. Department of Energy's Weatherization Assistance Program through a non-competitive application process. An additional \$250,000 was available to other non-profit organizations, non-entitlement local governments, public agencies, and regional councils through a competitive application process. A total of 47 organizations received URP94 funding which enabled them to assist more than 650 households.

A comprehensive study of the 1994 demonstration cycle indicated that it had filled a vital niche, and that there was strong, broad-based support for continuing the program. At the same time, the study elicited some thoughtful suggestions which led to numerous improvements in the design of the Urgent Repair Program. After many additional program adjustments over the past 26 years, URP is now a very popular tried and true product, filling a vital service niche. Close to \$59 million in URP funding has been committed to date to assist over 16,400 households with repairs and accessibility modifications.

From May of 2002, until February of 2004 a portion of recaptured URP funds (from recipients that were unable to use their entire allocation within the allotted time) was dedicated to a special Displacement Prevention Partnership Program fund ("DPP"). Under DPP, very-low income homeowners are referred to the Agency by the Independent Living Rehabilitation Program at the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services) if they face imminent displacement due to mobility limitations requiring home modifications. Since 2004, over \$25 million has been set aside for DPP. To date, modifications have been completed on over 5,500 households, all through local offices of Independent Living Services.

Those with experience under the recent cycles of URP have found some significant changes in the guidelines. The significant changes included raising the maximum eligible hard costs, revising program support expense allowances, changing the form of assistance from grants to loans, and reducing the percentage of assisted households that must fall below 30% of the area median income. This year continues that trend. To avoid confusing one cycle with another, we will often refer to the current cycle as URP21.

### 3. Funding

The total amount of funding available under URP21 is \$4.5 million. Support for URP21 comes from the State appropriated North Carolina Housing Trust Fund.

Under this program cycle, funding limitations will apply to only the large entitlement cities. These five units of local government that receive CDBG funds directly from HUD may apply for a maximum of \$50,000. These "Large Entitlements" are the cities of Charlotte, Durham, Greensboro, Raleigh, and Winston-Salem.

The maximum allocation to an organization or government agency proposing to serve a multi-county service area (two or more counties in their entirety) is \$200,000. The maximum allocation to an organization or government entity proposing to serve an area of less than two entire counties is \$100,000. Only applicants proposing to serve areas with populations of 5,000 or more are eligible. The minimum allocation is \$50,000.

**Eligible applicants may submit only one application.** Funding provided to recipient organizations will be in the form of conditional grants.

URP21 assistance provided by Recipients to eligible households **cannot exceed \$10,000 in hard and soft costs** per dwelling unit. There is no minimum amount of Program funds that can be spent on any assisted dwelling unit.

A share of each Recipient's URP21 allocation may be used for program support expense, but must be accounted for and claimed on a per-unit basis. Eligible program support expenses are those necessary and reasonable costs directly associated with the delivery of program assistance, such as: (1) salaries and benefits for technical staff or fees to consultants for work write-ups, cost estimates, inspections, etc.; or (2) office supplies and materials consumed in carrying out repairs. The maximum amount available varies with the amount of the hard costs. All URP assisted units may receive base program support of \$200. Units with hard costs exceeding \$500 may receive additional soft costs up to 10% of the hard cost for eligible program support expenses, so long as the total soft cost for the unit does not exceed \$1,000, as indicated by the table below.

URP Hard Costs	Maximum Program Support
From \$501 to \$10,000	\$200 + 10% of the Hard Cost (not to exceed \$1,000)
Up to \$500	\$200

For instance, if the hard costs associated with the repair or modification of a given unit is \$3,250 the Recipient may claim up to \$525 for program support expenses (\$200 + \$325).

#### **4. Schedule**

Applications for Program funding must be received at NCHFA by **5:00 pm, January 25, 2021**. Applications will be rated per the criteria described below. Program awards will be announced before the end of April, 2021. After the implementation workshop in June 2021 for program administrators and technical staff, Funding Agreements will be executed. Successful applicants will be given a maximum of 18 months to complete their URP projects, and must report program progress quarterly.

#### **5. Eligible applicants**

Eligible applicants for URP21 funds include: 1) nonprofit organizations; 2) units of local government; and, 3) regional councils. Applicants for Program funding are directly responsible for the administration of projects being funded, even when contracting with third parties for administration.

#### **6. Eligible households**

Only households with special needs as defined in Section 1 (Introduction), paragraph 5 are eligible for assistance under URP. A minimum of 50% of the household units declared in the Application for Funding to be assisted under a Recipient's URP21 allocation must have incomes that fall below 30% of the area median income. No URP funds may benefit households with incomes exceeding 50% of the area median. Only owner-occupied housing is eligible for assistance under the Urgent Repair Program. Income limits will be defined using the most recent HUD income estimates, as provided by the Agency (see URP income limits at our web site [www.nchfa.com](http://www.nchfa.com) under the Urgent Repair Program section).

#### **7. Eligible activities**

URP21 funds may be used exclusively to alleviate housing conditions that pose an imminent threat to the life or safety of very low-income households with special needs, or to their ability to remain in their homes independent of institutional confinement. Upon completion, housing units repaired/modified under URP do not have to meet any housing codes or habitability standards, but the work performed under the Program must meet the latest applicable North Carolina State Residential Building Code standards and be performed in accordance with all state and local permitting, inspections, licensing, and insurance requirements.

#### **8. Eligible forms of assistance**

Assistance provided to owner-occupants by Recipient organizations under URP21 shall be in the form of a loan covering the hard and soft costs (program support) of the URP funds associated with the repair/modification of the unit. Homeowners will receive an unsecured deferred, interest-free loan, forgiven at the rate of \$2,000 per year, until the principal balance is reduced to zero. Recipients must use the loan documents provided

by the Agency, and Recipient matching funds are not to be included in these loan documents. Recipients will be expected to have adequate project procedures to ensure that Program documents are properly processed.

## **9. Application review and ranking process**

Applications for Program funds will be reviewed and ranked on applicant capacity to operate the project, past performance under Agency Programs, if applicable, and the project location (including an underserved county). A four-step review process will be used: threshold review, competitive ranking, Agency board approval, and execution of Funding Agreements.

### **9.1 Threshold review**

**Applications that do not include an attached résumé for each person listed in the table under III C on page 7 will be considered incomplete.** The threshold review will eliminate any applications which are incomplete, were not received by the deadline, are from ineligible entities, or are not accompanied by the required application fee or a copy of the original application. The threshold review is also meant to eliminate applicants lacking minimal capacity to operate the project. The following factors will be considered:

- 1) The experience of the applicant in undertaking similar projects;
- 2) The past performance of the applicant, if applicable, under housing rehabilitation programs;
- 3) The capacity of the organization, including staffing support, to complete the project. (*Special attention will be given to the availability of qualified technical staff to diagnose repair or modification needs and implement the appropriate measures to address the needs, professionally and efficiently.*)

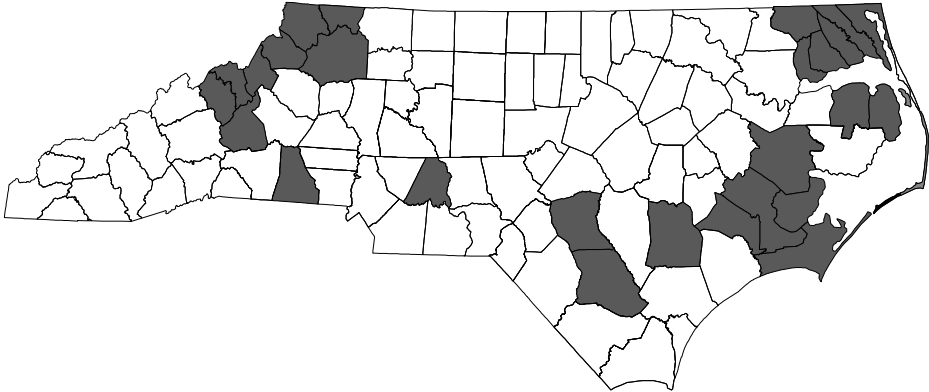
The capacity of units of local government or others proposing to administer the project through a third party will be rated based on that party's qualifications, experience, and past performance under Agency programs, if applicable.

### **9.2 Competitive ranking**

The next phase of the selection process will be to rate and rank applications based on a number of factors related to applicant capacity as determined by (1) staff qualifications and experience, (2) performance under past cycles of the Urgent Repair Program (including the percentage of targeted units completed under active grants and timeliness of grant completion), if applicable, or recent performance under other repair initiatives; and, (3) the accuracy and completeness of the URP21 application. A comprehensive and effective system for referring clients to services other than housing will also be a positive rating factor. Points will be awarded for matching local funds (for hard costs only) as well as for proposing to serve counties underserved by the URP funds since the Program's inception (see below). Projects proposing to serve households with urgent repair

needs that can be met through other state- or federally-funded housing assistance programs are discouraged and will be at a competitive disadvantage. (URP is designed to be used as funding of last resort.) Points will also be awarded to organizations that applied for last year’s URP cycle but were not recommended for funding. The Agency will not fund two applications with overlapping service areas.

**Counties Underserved with the Urgent Repair Program**



- |            |           |          |           |            |
|------------|-----------|----------|-----------|------------|
| Alleghany  | Ashe      | Avery    | Beaufort  | Bladen     |
| Camden     | Carteret  | Chowan   | Cleveland | Craven     |
| Cumberland | Currituck | Dare     | Duplin    | Gates      |
| Jones      | McDowell  | Mitchell | Pamlico   | Pasquotank |
| Perquimans | Stanly    | Tyrrell  | Watauga   | Wilkes     |
|            |           | Yancey   |           |            |

**9.3 Agency Board approval**

After completion of the application review and ranking process, the final funding decision will be made by the Agency's board of directors. It is the goal of Agency staff to take their recommendations to the board in April 2021.

**9.4 Post-Approval Documentation and Funding Agreements**

Following board approval of the final ranking of applications, Applicants approved by the Agency board will receive conditional award letters and requests for additional documentation (Post Approval Documentation). Funding Agreements will be forwarded to Recipients following receipt by the Agency of all information requested in the post approval documentation packet and attendance at the mandatory URP21 Implementation Workshop. Recipients will be given 45 days to execute and return the Funding Agreements to the Agency.



Post approval documentation will include the following:

- 1) A copy of the Recipient's Procurement and Disbursement Policy;
- 2) Bonding/Honesty and Fidelity Insurance documentation. All Recipients must submit evidence that honesty and fidelity insurance coverage is available in an amount not less than 50% of their URP21 funding allocation;
- 3) Organizational Documents. Recipients that are not units of government may be asked to supply copies of their organizational documents, including articles of incorporation, by-laws, and a listing of all directors, officers, and staff;
- 4) Conflict of Interest Policy (for private-nonprofit organizations); and,
- 5) The Applicant's proposed URP21 Assistance Policy.

## **9.5 Funding award**

Upon receipt and approval by the Agency of the Post Approval Documentation packet, the Agency will forward the Funding Agreement to the Recipient. Once the executed Funding Agreement is returned to the Agency, an initial disbursement of 50% of the award amount will be sent to the Recipient organization. Project activities may commence upon receipt of the fully executed Funding Agreement. *Note: If all necessary documentation is not received by the Agency within 45 days of the date of the conditional award letter, the award may be canceled and the funds de-obligated.*

## **10. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS TO THE APPLICATION**

### **10.1 Requests for Application forms**

Program Application forms may be downloaded from the Agency website [www.nchfa.com](http://www.nchfa.com), or requested from the Agency by calling Gloria Moore at 919-981-2623 or by writing to the address shown below (see section 10.4).

### **10.2 Application deadline**

An original application *and* one copy per grant request must be **received** by the Agency by **5:00 pm**, or postmarked by, **Monday January 25, 2020**.

### 10.3 Application fee

The application must be **accompanied** by a **non-refundable application fee**. The application fee must be paid by a check made payable to the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency. **The application fee is \$75.**

### 10.4 Address

All applications must be mailed or delivered to:

Attn: Gloria Moore, Home Ownership Programs  
North Carolina Housing Finance Agency  
3508 Bush Street  
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609-7509

### 10.5 Other Instructions

- 1) Automated application forms created in MS Excel are available at the Agency's website ([www.nchfa.com](http://www.nchfa.com)) or via e-mail. It is highly recommended that applicants use the automated version to take advantage of multiple automated calculations and general ease of use. The Excel version is designed such that the applicant tabs through the form, landing only where information is to be entered (the light yellow cells). All totals are automatically calculated (in the bright yellow cells). If you do not use the Excel version, please ensure that your application is typed or printed legibly in ink. Dollar amounts should be rounded to the nearest dollar. All applications should be signed and dated in ink on the "Certification" page by the applicant's chief administrative official as listed on the application under I.B.1. No applications will be accepted electronically or by Fax.
- 2) All applications should be submitted on the form provided. Except for requested attachments, please confine your responses to the provided space.
- 3) It is preferred that applications be fastened at the upper left corner by a single staple or binder clip. Covers, ring binders, and folders are discouraged, as are attachments or exhibits which are not specifically requested.
- 4) All attachments should be clearly marked in the upper right hand corner per the instructions in the application. The attachments should be attached in the order that they were requested, at the back of the application following the last page.
- 5) Résumés should be current with the latest information for each of the staff listed in the table under III C on page 7 of the application. At minimum, all formal education, seminars, courses, training, and all previous job experiences that apply to the job assignment in the application should be included.