

City of Rocky Mount
Assistance Policy
For the 2020 Cycle of the
Urgent Repair Program

What is the Urgent Repair Program? The City of Rocky Mount has been awarded \$100,000 by the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency (“NCHFA”) under the 2020 cycle of the Urgent Repair Program (“URP20”). 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 12 households will be assisted under URP20.

This Assistance Policy describes who is eligible to apply for assistance under URP20, 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 URP20 project to be fair, open, and consistent with the City’s approved application for funding and with NCHFA’s URP Program Guidelines.

The funds provided by NCHFA come from the North Carolina Housing Trust Fund. Additional funds for repair costs are provided by the City of Rocky Mount in the amount of at least \$50,000.

Eligibility

To be eligible for assistance under URP20 applicants:

- 1) must reside within the city limits of the Rocky Mount and own and occupy the home in need of repair;
- 2) 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);
- 3) must have a special need (i.e. be elderly, ≥ 62 years old, handicapped or disabled, a single parent with a dependent living at home, a Veteran, a large family with ≥ 5 household members or a household with a child below the age of six with an elevated blood lead level (between $10\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$ and $20\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$)); and
- 4) must have urgent repair needs, which cannot be met through other state or federally-funded housing assistance programs.

URP20 Income Limits* for City of Rocky Mount

Number in Household	30% of Median	50% of Median (very low income)
1	\$11,600	\$19,350
2	\$13,250	\$22,100
3	\$14,900	\$24,850
4	\$16,550	\$27,600
5	\$17,900	\$29,850
6	\$19,200	\$32,050
7	\$20,550	\$34,250
8	\$21,850	\$36,450

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

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.

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 URP20

<i>Special Needs (for definitions, see below)</i>	<i>Points</i>
Disabled, Elderly or Veteran Head of Household (62 or older)	4
Disabled, Elderly, or Veteran Household Member (not Head of Household)	3
Single-Parent Household (with one or more children in the home)	3
Large Family (5 or more permanent residents)	2
Emergency (may submit without regard to application deadlines)	2
Elevated Blood Lead Level Child	2
<i>Income (See Income Table above)</i>	<i>Points</i>
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 URP20.

Recipients of assistance under the URP20 will be chosen by the above criteria without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status or disability.

The definitions of special needs' populations under URP20 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 the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable.
- *Child with elevated blood lead level:* a child below the age of six with an elevated blood lead level between 10 µg/dl and 20 µg/dl.

Client Referral and Support Services Many 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.

What is the form of assistance under URP20? The City will provide assistance to homeowners, whose homes are selected for repair/modification in the form of a loan. Homeowners will receive an **unsecured deferred, interest-free loan**, forgiven at a rate of \$2,000 per year, until the principal balance is reduced to zero.

What is the amount of the loan? The amount of the loan will depend on the scope of work necessary to address the identified imminent threats to life and/or safety, and that will be determined by the city’s rehabilitation specialist. There is no minimum to the amount of the loan; however, the maximum life-time limit according to the guidelines of URP20 is \$10,000.

What kinds of work will be done? Only repairs that address imminent threats to the life and/or safety of occupants of the dwelling unit or accessibility modifications will be performed under the city’s URP20. It should be noted that all deficiencies in a home may not be rectified with the available funds.

All work that is completed under URP20 must meet or exceed NC Residential Building Code.

Who will do the work on the homes? The City is obligated under URP20 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 those very difficult 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 DUNS #.
- Register with CCR.
- Must be Renovation, Repair, and Painting certified and must follow specific work

practices to prevent lead contamination for work performed in homes built before 1978.

Please request a copy of 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" is described in the Procurement and Disbursement Policy.

What are the steps in the process, from application to completion? Now that you have the information about how to qualify for the City of Rocky Mount's URP20, what work can be done, and who will do it, let's go through all the major steps in the process:

- **Completing an Application form:** Homeowners who wish to apply for assistance may apply at any time while funds are available. Apply by contacting Kendra M. Silver, Community Development Technician, at (252) 972-1357, Loretta M. Braswell, Citizen Services Representative, at (252) 972-1354, or Mabel Taylor-Jones, 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 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 above. 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 Cornelia L. McGee, Community Development Administrator, at (252) 972-1178 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 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 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 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 mailed 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 \$10,000.
- **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 "proceed order" 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 URP20. 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 three representatives of the City of Rocky Mount. 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.
- **Post-construction meeting:** Following construction the contractor and the Housing 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 in section 13 has been satisfied and the homeowner has signed a Certificate of Satisfaction, the job will be closed out (fully completed).

What are the key dates? If, after reading this document, you feel that you qualify for this program and wish to apply, please keep the following dates in mind:

- Applications available to the public starting July 27, 2020.
- Applications must be turned in at the City of Rocky Mount Department of Community Development with all required documentation by 5:00 PM on September 1, 2020.
- Loans made to selected households within sixty days while funds are available.
- All rehabilitation work must be under contract by December 31, 2020.

How do I request an application? Contact:

Department of Community and Business 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, Community Development Division, 2nd Floor, and located at 331 S. Franklin Street, Rocky Mount, NC 27801. Applications will be available on the City website at www.rockymountnc.gov located under Community Development tab.

Is there a procedure for dealing with complaints, disputes and appeals? 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.

During the application process:

1. 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, Cornelia L. McGee, within five (5) business days of the initial decision and detail the concern in writing. A written response by the CD Administrator will be made to any persons who place a complaint in writing within five (5) business days.
2. 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 CD Administrator. Appeals should be directed to the attention of Cynthia T. Jones, Director of Community and Business Development, City of Rocky Mount, PO Box 1180, Rocky Mount, NC 27802.
3. The City of Rocky Mount will respond in writing to any complaints or appeals within 10 business days of receiving written comments.

During the repair/modification process:

1. 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 Specialist.
2. The Housing 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.
3. If problems persist, a mediation conference between the homeowner and the contractor may be convened by the Housing Specialist and facilitated by the City's Community Development Administrator.
4. Should the mediation conference fail to resolve the dispute, the Community Development Administrator will render a written final decision.
5. If the Housing Specialist finds that the work is being completed according to contract, the complaint will be noted and the Housing Specialist and the homeowner will discuss the concern and the reason for the Housing Specialist's decision.

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.

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 URP20 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.

What about favoritism? All activities under URP20, 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.

Who can I contact about URP20? Any questions regarding any part of this application or program should be addressed to:

Cornelia L. McGee
Community Development Administrator
Department of Community and Business Development
City Hall, 2nd Floor
Rocky Mount, NC 27802
(252) 972-1178

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 22nd day of June 2020.



[Signature]
Mayor

ATTEST: [Signature] City Clerk
Pam Casey