

Executive Progress Report Presented by Ms. Monique L. Pierre

Board of Commissioners Meeting Wednesday, October 23, 2024



165 SOUTH FRENCH BROAD AVE. ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA 28801

Executive Progress Report to the Board of Commissioners For Wednesday, October 23, 2024

Mission: The Mission of the Housing Authority of the City of Asheville is to provide safe, quality, and affordable housing, to expand available resources, and to collaborate with the community to create opportunities for resident self-reliance and economic independence.

Purpose of this Report: This report is designed to keep the Board of Commissioners, Residents and Staff informed about the business of the HACA. It includes the monthly report for the month of **September 2024** and is shared publicly to encourage transparency in the operations of the HACA. This document will be presented monthly to the Board of Commissioners, by the President and CEO.

Executive Summary

Status of Hurricane Helene Disaster Recovery

- Power and water are restored at all public housing sites.
- Information has been circulated and updated periodically via flyers regarding access to City, County and the HACA resources available on site.
- Wifi Internet is now available on site through Starlink at Pisgahview, Hillcrest, Klondyke and Asheville Terrace. Special thanks to Cliff Johnson for working with the provider to get the components installed.
- Resident Services will be slowly winding down the various distribution centers with an expected conclusion on or about October 28, 2024.

Critical issues: The City has issued a boiled water advisory. The HACA is following the City website closely to stay up to date on the recovery.

Special Recognition

Cherin Marmon-Saxe, Executive Assistant, has worked tirelessly during this disaster bringing well-water from home to help her colleagues, assisting with resource distribution, preparing sandwiches, ordering supplies, and coordinating to keep our website updated with relevant storm and recovery information.

Jerall Clay, Trevor Sluder, Ronnie Gillespie, and Bobby McNeil were instrumental in the early days of the disaster. Mr. Clay was on site immediately the day of providing reassurance and support to residents at Asheville Terrace. Our maintenance team also distributed United Way and City donated goods out to our sites, cut down trees to unblock access for the streets and to allow power to be restored at Klondyke and etc.

Resident Services staff, and our Community Health Workers, alongside resident volunteers,



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coordinated, the distribution of food, water, and other vital resources on all public housing sites. Further recognition can be found in the Resident Services Department report.

Most importantly, residents organized resources and checked on their neighbors. They embodied my favorite mantra, "Commitment + Unity = Community".

Together We Get the Job Done Hurricane Recovery Highlights



Thank you to the Army for filling water tanks.



Thank you to the Inlivian Team for driving in from Charlotte to distribute food and water for our seniors.



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Thank you, Ms. Young and the entire team, at Hillcrest!



and Community Staff, Residents Volunteers made all this possible!



Thank you, World Central Kitchen, for delivering many hot meals for our residents!







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Internal Process Improvement

Objectives:

- 1. Recruit and Retain Quality Employees
- 2. Strengthen HACA's Financial Well-being
- 3. Develop Internal Control Protocols

Progress:

Information Technology – The IT department under the leadership of Adina Bianchi has completed the following tasks:

IT Dept. Hurricane Relief Efforts:

- 1. Distributed hotspot enabled cell phones to staff needing remote working capabilities
- 2. Provided training and support for staff using remote working equipment/software
- Configured phone system to forward to staff cell phones and be accessible via a web browser
- 4. Coordinating with ERC, Spectrum, and Starlink to restore internet to HACA sites

Other:

- 1. Began setup and deployment planning for new desk phone system with RingFree
- Signed contract and started planning phase with web designer to redesign the HACA website

Compliance and Internal Audit

Insurance Claims – Lead by Ms. Elain Scott, with the objective to have a single point of contact for all insurance claims and to ensure proper documentation and follow-through on claims activities.

Month:	September	To Date		
Number of Claims Filed	Number of Accidents	Type of Incident	Insurance Payout/ Total Amount of Loss	Description
5		GC- Vehicle 72 Klondyke, Property 88A Klondyke, 86A Klondyke. GC-(Helene Storm) 2 Leased Vehicles, Multiple locations 39 Cordova		Excess wind and rain causing roof damage, rotted tree fell on vehicle, Hurricane storm damage to properties and vehicles, multiple locations schedules and locations to follow. Waiting for NCHARRP Adjuster to report total amounts of loss.

WC – Worker's Compensation **VA** – Vehicle Accident Claim **GC** – General Claims (Fire, Property Damage, etc.) **PI** – Personal Injury (Tenant Claim)



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Progress:

Due to Hurricane Helene, there is no additional activity to report at this time.

Human Resources

Objectives:

1. Recruit and Retain Quality Employees

Progress (October):

New Hires:

1 – Resident Trainee (Rehired)
 Director of Finance – Ms. Janie Holland
 Director of Housing Choice Voucher Program – Ms. Dalerie Beard

Terminations:

0 - Total Terminations

Public Safety

Objectives:

- 1. Communicate more effectively and timely with City and County officials when criminal activities are taking place on the HACA communities
- 2. Preparing more formal memorandums to document incidents
- 3. Continue to pursue vehicle parking enforcement
- 4. Banned List Reporting

Protective Services: Jon Mobley, Protective Services Coordinator

Progress:

- 1. Applications have started coming in for Protective Service Specialist
- 2. The meeting with the sheriff will be rescheduled as soon as he is available.

Impact:

- 1. We are currently scheduling interviews to fill 4 PSS positions
- 2. We hope that the Sheriff's Department can use the budgeted money to fill gas in Protective Service Coverage
- 3. The past 3 weeks have been filled with finding resources for residents particularly are Asheville Terrace. Connections have been made with Food Connection, World Kitchen, and the 21st Airbourne for client services and goods



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Community Relations

Objectives:

- 1. Strong Community Relations
- 2. Increase Community Awareness

Progress:

- I met with Andy Barnette from Habitat for Humanity to discuss the parameters of our homeownership program and the opportunity to create a unique partnership to further our Homeownership program.
- Met with the LEAF Global Arts team and toured their facility. We discussed the opportunity for collaboration on a HACA Youth Choir, music lessons and other activities to expand youth involvement in the arts.
- 3. Participated in the planning committee meeting for "A Voteless People is a Voiceless People" initiative to engage young black men in the civics of voting.
- 4. I attended the Asheville Buncombe Continuum of Care Board meeting and general membership meeting. (member) - A presentation was conducted regarding the Ramada Inn Project. A recommendation was not made to the City of Asheville at this time due to ongoing due diligence.
- 5. I attended the Buncombe County Racial Equity Committee Meeting (member)

Resident Participation Activities and Engagement

Objectives:

- 1. Expand available resources for resident wellbeing (youth and adult services)
- 2. Provide improved services that support resident self-reliance and economic independence
- 3. Build better tools for communications with residents

Progress:

Resident engagement is ongoing.

- 1. Rent Café registration letters have been sent to residents
- 2. Resident Rent Café registration assistance meetings are planned for October.
- 3. An authority wide newsletter is in development. Information is being gathered and once the template is complete, it will be sent out regularly (no less than quarterly).
- 4. Resident Services staff continue to assist the Resident Associations to identify eligible uses and effectively deliver resources and services.



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Vacancy Report – October 2024

Evictions Totals — Updated: October 21, 2024	42
Evicted - Criminal Activity	6
Evicted - Lease Violation	0
Evicted - Non-Compliance	0
Evicted - Non-Payment	36
Evicted - Drug Activity	0

When a tenant is evicted, they are locked out usually with 7 days to arrange to retrieve their personal belongings.

Ready for Occupancy: 74

When a unit is "ready for occupancy" that means it is cleaned and the site is waiting to receive the tenant file from admissions. Currently applicants are offered one unit. If they do not accept, they are moved to the end of the list. We are examining the effect of this policy.

Assigned File for Move-in: 10
 Assigned file for Move-in means that the site has received a file for a particular unit and they are arranging for the move-in date.

Maintenance Turn: 48

The Maintenance team utilizes a punch list to indicate what needs to be done to prepare a unit for occupancy. Depending on the severity of the unit when it is turned back over to the site when the prior tenancy is terminated. Units in this condition usually need a number of services including painting, holes repaired, windows and general scrubbing.

Accounting Monthly Report – Janie Holland, Director of Finance

Objectives:

- 1. Improve the HACA's financial operations, structure and reporting capability
- 2. Diversify revenue sources to promote financial sustainability and stability
- 3. Upgrade HACA's use of technology and develop a strategy for moving toward a paperless environment
- 4. Ensure work processes and decision-making practices are aligned to support HACA's mission

Progress:

- HACA brought onboard a new Finance Director, Janie Holland, with HA MTW
 experience. She comes from a larger HA and is evaluating our current operations, structure,
 and reporting capabilities. She is crafting plans for improvements and will report on these
 plans in the coming months. She is currently working with Novogradac, our auditor, to finalize
 the 2023 audit.
- 2. HACA has an Escheatment process that enables us to clear our outstanding checks for a more accurate reporting of our financial health.
- 3. Escheatment is the process of contacting issuers of uncleared checks with the outcome of



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- cashing the checks, reissuing the checks, or sending the amounts to the NC Unclaimed Property department on October 15, 2024.
- 4. Our new Finance Director comes from a paperless HA and has been inquiring about best practices and technology to transition HACA to a paperless environment. She will work closely with IT to develop a strategic plan.
- 5. Fiscal responsibility and reduction in waste is one of Finance's roles in promoting HACA's mission. Finance fosters an environment that equips our team with the correct tools needed to complete their jobs and keep costs low so that funding can be used to meet the HACA mission. All spending is in alignment with the approved annual budget.

Impact:

- 1. Total Income from all properties MTD is \$4,313,357 and YTD is \$37,298,358 or 67% of 2024 Budgeted amount of \$55,812,368.
 - Tenant income is on track at 73% YTD or \$10,785,051,
 - Grant Income is under at 65% YTD or \$24,064,027 due to delay in Reimagining Deaverview project, and
 - Other Income is under 59% YTD or \$2,449,280, due to non-transfers from surplus cash monthly.
- 2. Total Expenses from all properties MTD is \$3,968,383 and YTD is \$38,292,946 or 72% of 2024 Budgeted amount of \$53,041,751. The target is for Expenses to be 75% of Budget through 9/30/2024.
 - Admin Expenses are under at 67% YTD or \$5,806,164 due to staff changes,
 - Tenant Services Expenses are under at 16% or \$163,996 due to fewer community events and activities YTD.
 - Utility Expenses are over at 84% YTD or \$3,388,208 due to increases in water/sewer
 - Maintenance Expenses are under at 53% YTD or \$4,511,524 due to savings on elimination of temporary labor services,
 - Protective Services are under at 67% YTD or \$137,288.
 - General Expenses are over at 103% YTD or \$812,089 due to increased Tenant Rents write off expense, and increased insurance expense.
 - Non-Operating Expenses are over at 104% YTD or \$180,667 due to decreased insurance proceeds, and
 - Housing Assistance Payments are on track at 77% YTD or \$23,293,010.



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Resident Services Monthly Reporting - Shaunda Jackson, Director

Objectives:

- 1. Increased resident engagement
- 2. Continued growth of staff
- 3. Grow program funding

Resident Services Hurricane Helene Disaster Relief Report

Shaunda Jackson, Karolina Hopkins, Robert Butler, Angela Clemmons, Thomas Priester, Eric Robinson, Duke Finely, James Howard, Parris, Finely, Ashley Jackson, Misty Beck, Diana Kuzmich, Nate Sneed and Clarence Robinson

1. Summary

This report provides an overview of the disaster relief efforts carried out by the Resident Services team following Hurricane Helene. Due to being stranded at the NAHRO conference, initial responses were coordinated remotely through partners. Upon our return on Monday, September 30th, we worked tirelessly to ensure resources reached affected residents in Asheville Housing Authority (AHA) communities, with significant contributions from community organizations and volunteers.

2. Impact of the Hurricane on AHA Communities

Hurricane Helene had severe effects on AHA communities:

- Power and Communication Outages: Verizon towers were down, and most residents had no phone, internet, or power.
- Water Scarcity: Flushing water became difficult to obtain.
- Limited Access to Asheville: All flights were canceled, and highways were closed until Monday, September 30, at which time I-26 was the only accessible route.

3. Initial Relief Coordination (September 28-30, 2024)

During the storm, our Resident Services team was unable to return to Asheville until Monday, September 30th, due to flight cancellations and road closures. However, we took immediate action before our return:

- Outreach to Partners: We contacted local and out-of-town partners, including the Asheville Dream Center and Buncombe County Community Paramedic team, to provide immediate aid.
- Water Distribution: On Sunday, September 29th, the Buncombe County Community Paramedic team began checking on families and delivering water to addresses we provided, helping alleviate the water scarcity.
- Asheville Dream Center's Response: The Dream Center remained in close communication and started outreach to secure resources for affected residents.



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4. On-the-Ground Efforts (Post-September 30, 2024)

Key actions included:

- Team and Volunteer Coordination: Every available Resident Services staff member and Rhodney were assigned to specific communities to receive supplies, support residents and coordinate with community partners.
- Supply Distribution: On Tuesday, October 1st, we received a call from United Way to pick
 up supplies. We had no knowledge of what staff were available or if we had maintenance
 workers to drive trucks. We met at Central Office to determine the number of staff
 members that where available and stocked the boardroom with supplies for the elderly
 and disabled residents. These efforts were duplicated at each housing community.
- On Wednesday, October 2nd, supplies began flowing into the Edington Center, which served as the central distribution point for all sites.

5. Communication and Logistics Challenges

- Limited Communication: Cell towers and internet capabilities were down, making communication with residents and partners nearly impossible. Despite this, we managed to coordinate our efforts as best as we could and get some relief to residents.
- Transportation Delays: Initially all roads to WNC were deemed unsafe for travel and vehicles were not permitted to enter Asheville until Monday, September 30. Road closures significantly delayed the arrival of supplies. Trips that would normally take an hour took 8-10 hours or more, affecting our ability to provide a set schedule for deliveries at the various sites.

6. Partnerships and Support

- Asheville Dream Center: They played a key role by constantly asking about our residents'
 needs. In addition to water and other resources, I requested volunteers and asked for a
 point person to assist at the Edington Center because it was more equipped to handle the
 larger deliveries from 18-wheeler trucks and for housing large quantities of resources.
 Philip Cooper was assigned to provide on-the-ground support.
- Volunteer Coordination: Due to limited communication capabilities, it became difficult to coordinate the numerous volunteers from organizations and grassroots groups who arrived eager to help. We were experiencing a duplication of efforts at some sites and a lack of support at others. Diana was assigned as our volunteer coordinator.
- Communications improved by Sunday, and we were able to organize a call with various organizations, assigning each to a specific site with a Resident Services staff contact to ensure each housing community was supported with resources and wellness checks, especially for our elderly and disabled residents. We also assigned a point of contact for meal deliveries to ensure every community had at least one hot meal a day.
- Vice Chair Robinson assisted with having water totes placed throughout each community, provided wellness checks, meal delivery, delivered flush buckets door to door, acquired blankets, grills, heaters, and other supplies and donations.



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- StarLink internet services were provided for 90 days across all sites to restore communication. This was coordinated by Ambrose Consulting, Sage Turner and La Milpa.
- Portable Showers, Portable toilets and wash stations were provided at various sites coordinated by Ambrose Consulting.
- Operation Gateway, Tzedek, and Asheville Dream Center provided community members with stipends for various jobs such as unloading trucks, stocking and refurbishing inventory after hours.
- Angela and Kareem (Maintenance) used their personal vehicle to transport barrels of water to residents for flushing, distributed resources and supported residents and every site.
- Community Health Workers Ashley, Duke, and James supported with resource distribution, meal and resource deliveries, unloading trucks, restocking, oversight and anything else needed.
- Ms. Battle joined resident services in the first week to support with sorting and resource distribution at Aston and Edington.
- OJ lead the team unloading trucks and his wife helped organize and distribute.
- Coordination, resource distribution, meal delivery and center oversight by Commissioners Butch Robinson and Roy Harris.
- Volunteer and Community Meals provided by Clarence Robinson and several other restaurants sent food to every site.

7. Edington Center's Role as a Distribution Hub

As a result of the collaboration between Asheville Housing Authority and all the amazing community partners and volunteers, the Edington Center became the central distribution hub for all AHA communities and other areas in Buncombe County. Volunteers and organizations regularly picked up supplies from the Edington Center and delivered them across the county, ensuring resources reached the most affected areas.

8. Next Steps

Moving forward, we aim to improve our disaster response coordination and strengthen our partnerships to provide quicker, more efficient aid in future emergencies.

9. Conclusion

Despite the devastating impact of Hurricane Helene, the storm revealed the true strength and resilience of our community. In the face of adversity, community organizations came together, neighbors supported one another, and people from other cities and states joined the relief efforts. Volunteers showed up in overwhelming numbers, each eager to contribute to the recovery, and grassroots organizations unified to ensure that no community was left behind.

The outpouring of compassion and dedication was a testament to the power of collective action. It was in these moments, as we worked hand-in-hand to rebuild, that we saw the rainbow after the storm—a symbol of hope, unity, and the brighter days ahead. Our community stood strong,



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not because of any one person or organization, but because of the heart and spirit of everyone involved. This unity will continue to guide us as we recover and prepare for the future.

10. Additional Information

- Community Partners-Volunteers-Donors Report
- HACA Properties-Resident Svc Contacts

Property Management Monthly Reporting

Evette Smith, Director of Asset Management

Objectives:

- Maintain attractive, well-manicured properties/ building and quality fleet management
- 2. Continue to hire qualified staff to fill open positions

Progress:

- 1. Central Properties
 - Central Properties have devoted a lot of their time to support assisting residents with the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Staff called residents to assess their needs and to get the right supplies for them. All managers and maintenance staff were present and on site doing many things to assure residents were comfortable during this.

2. North Properties

 A special thank you to the residents of Hillcrest for all their efforts in assisting, organizing relief supplies and maintaining order in Hillcrest. Staff at Hillcrest are assisting residents with completing Hardship forms. Klondyke team Remee Crain, Nikita Lindsey and Bobby McNeil did a wonderful job of helping residents that units were damaged with relocation to safer units.

3. West Properties

A special thank you to the residents of PVA for all their efforts in assisting and
organizing relief supplies. The Pisgah view team is working steadily assisting residents
with their Hardship forms the maintenance has devoted their time to trash removal with
all the supplies given comes a lot of paper products even though it has been hard to
keep up they are doing a wonderful job. Deaverview staff have had boots on the
ground from day one assisting residents with their needs.

4. Southside Properties

Southside Properties staff have devoted their time to providing support assisting
residents with their needs. A big time Thank You to the FSS staff with their help
sometimes throughout all the properties. Supplies provided at the Eddington Center
and the Grant Center have helped the Southside residents along with food trucks.
Riverlink, Wildland and Asheville Drainage Ben Portwood's team came out and
cleaned up the Southside Stormwater area near Erskine.



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Impact:

1. This Presidentially Declared Disaster has paid a toll on us all, I am not sure if many of us have ever had to deal with anything like this. I like how we have all come together, helping one another if not but to just giving encouraging words.

Maintenance Monthly Reporting

Rhodney Norman, Director Maintenance

Objectives:

- 1. Establish centralized maintenance infrastructure
- 2. Improve work efficiencies and timely completion of work orders

Progress:

Since the last report, Maintenance crews have shifted gears and filled in to help with storm cleanup and restoration. We had a total of 42 downed trees throughout HACA communities with many on the roads and buildings. Many of our staff were out assisting residents the evening of the storm.

Our crews have also been busy with the set-up and distribution spots on all sites supplying water and essentials to residents and those in the community. Delivering to those most vulnerable. We also assisted in flushing toilets for those residents in Aston, Bartlett and Altamont. We will continue with these efforts until water is restored.

As we move forward in October crews will get back to vacant unit work and HQS inspections to help reduce the number of vacancies. With the number of displaced families throughout the community, we should see an influx of families on the waitlist.

Impact:

With the status of the city without power and water in some areas we want to start looking forward to alternatives in the future such as solar panels and alternative water sources. I will report once those discussions have started.

HUD Updates

Sheri Guyton, Director Administration

Objectives:

- 1. Document and Task all HUD systems and recertification deadlines for users
- 2. Chart functionality, and identify which staff have access
- 3. Improve the submission timeline for all Plans and Reports

Progress:

1. Documentation of 80% of HUD systems has been completed. Understanding and



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familiarizing myself with each system, why we use them and how it affects productivity if not using the appropriate systems for staff.

- 2. Ongoing progress in gathering information about what specific job functions they execute requires access to and understanding the appropriate level of access.
- 3. Gathering timelines for submissions. Once completed, I will compile an agency wide annual timeline for deliverables

Impact:

- Easily identify who has access and know when recertifications are due. Understanding the process on how it affects productivity.
- 2. Ensure access is appropriate for each user and to give them the permissions they need for job functions
- 3. Ensure our reporting to HUD is timely and accurately submitted.

5 Year Plan/MTW Status:

Our 5-Year Annual Plan and MTW Supplement submission was completed for 2025.

Continue to attend meetings and webinars to further my knowledge of HUD systems and gain specific job knowledge as needed.

Helped field calls from home from residents in our Southside Community during the aftermath of hurricane Helene, ensuring calls were answered and appropriate work orders were completed by on-call maintenance staff.



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Housing Choice Voucher Reports

Dalerie Beard, Director Housing Choice Voucher Program

General Update -

Our department is currently addressing several vacancies that require urgent attention. These vacancies are critical to our mission, and we are actively strategizing to minimize their impact. Recent updates include a comprehensive assessment of our leasing processes aimed at streamlining operations and enhancing our outreach efforts. This approach focuses on improving connections with prospective tenants and the entire Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) team, ensuring a quicker turnaround in filling vacant units.

To tackle these vacancies, we have implemented targeted activities, including a team engagement initiative where all HCV staff will be assigned a task to expedite the lease-ups. Additionally, we are emphasizing the urgency of lease-ups by communicating daily with Property Managers and Inspectors. By fostering these connections and enhancing communication, we believe we can significantly increase our leasing rates.

I also want to express my heartfelt appreciation for our dedicated staff and volunteers who have worked tirelessly in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Their commitment to connecting with HCV residents and landlords during this challenging time has been commendable. They have played a vital role in maintaining communication and providing essential support, ensuring our residents remain informed and connected while navigating their crises.

From now on, I am taking concrete steps to assess the units affected by the hurricane. This includes conducting thorough inspections and collaborating with landlords to ensure properties meet safety standards. By addressing any concerns promptly, we can create a supportive environment for our residents and reinforce their trust in our services. Together, we will navigate these challenges and emerge stronger as a department.

Your expertise and guidance are greatly appreciated if any changes are recommended.

Asheville Housing & Related Properties - Occupancy Report

The goal is to lease up to 20 applicants per week over the next 8 weeks. Meeting our goal, we would have zero vacancies before we go out for the Christmas Holiday. I will plan regular meetings with the maintenance team and the property managers to assure that we achieve our goal by 12/12/2024.

Total Vacant PBV Units = 130

28 = efficiencies

34= 1-bedrooms

45 = 2-bedrooms

19 = 3-bedrooms

3 = 4-bedrooms

1 = 5-bedrooms