

Washington County
Assistance Policy
For the 2023 Cycle of the
Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan Pool

Washington County Service Area

Washington County has contracted the Albemarle Commission to perform all administrative and operational aspects of the program and to act as the General Contractor.

What is the Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan Pool?

Washington County (the "County") has been awarded Membership by the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency ("NCHFA") under the 2023 Cycle of the Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan Pool ("ESFRLP"). This program provides Members with funds via a "loan pool" to assist with the rehabilitation of moderately deteriorated homes that are owned and occupied by lower-income, special needs households. ESFRLP assists eligible households by facilitating aging in place, meeting minimum housing code requirements, promoting long-term affordability, lowering operating costs, and stabilizing pre-1978 homes that include children aged 6 or under whose health is threatened by the presence of lead hazards.

Washington County has been allocated an initial set-aside of \$162,000 which it plans to apply toward the rehabilitation of at least three (3) houses in Washington County. After demonstrating successful use of this allocation, the County may access additional funds, when available, on a unit-by-unit basis from the ESFRLP loan pool to assist additional homes.

This Assistance Policy describes who is eligible for assistance under ESFRLP, how applications for assistance will be ranked, what the terms of assistance are, and how the rehabilitation process will be managed. Washington County, and its Consultant to act as the General Contractor - Albemarle Commission (the "Consultant"), have designed the ESFRLP project to be fair, open, and consistent with the approved application for funding and with ESFRLP Program Guidelines.

The funds provided by NCHFA come from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Federal HOME Investment Partnerships Program. Assistance for construction-related costs (hard costs) will be provided to qualified homeowners as no interest, no payment loans of up to \$40,000 which are forgiven at the rate of \$8,000 per year. Non-construction-related costs (soft costs including lead/asbestos inspections/clearances, radon testing and environmental reviews) will be provided to the County/Consultant in the form of a grant.

Who is Eligible to Apply?

There are three major requirements to be eligible for ESFRLP assistance:

- 1) The housing unit to be rehabilitated with ESFRLP funds must be located in Washington County and must be owner-occupied. The household occupying the unit must have elderly, disabled, and/or veteran (see definitions) full-time household member or a child aged 6 or under threatened by lead hazards in the home;
- 2) The gross annual household income must not exceed 80% of the Area Median Income for the County (see income limit table on the following page) and;
- 3) The cost of rehabilitation cannot exceed the ESFRLP Program limit of \$40,000 and must include all Essential Rehabilitation Criteria as described in the ESFRLP Administrator's Manual for the 2023 Cycle (available online at www.NCHFA.com).

Unfortunately, not all homes can be rehabilitated to meet the Essential Rehabilitation Criteria with the limited funding available. Some otherwise-eligible households may be deemed ineligible for assistance because their homes fail this test.

What Types Of Houses Are Eligible?

Properties are eligible only if they meet all of the following requirements:

- The property must require at least \$5,000 of improvements to meet the ESFRLP Property Standards or, if a local code requirement is more stringent than a specific ESFRLP Property Standard, the more stringent local minimum housing code requirement(s) will be used.
- Site-built and off-frame modular units listed as real property are eligible for assistance. Manufactured housing is eligible for assistance if the foundation and utility hookups are permanently affixed including removal of all transporting equipment (e.g., wheels, axles, tongue), installation of a masonry foundation and tie-downs, and the land on which the unit sits is owned by the occupant.
- No more than fifty percent (50%) of the total area of the unit may be used for an office or business (e.g., day care, hair salon, room rental, etc.). Program funds may only be used to improve the residential exterior, interior and systems portion of mixed-use buildings.
- The property must be free of environmental hazards and other nuisances as defined by all applicable codes or regulations, or any such hazards or nuisances must be corrected as part of the rehabilitation of the home. The County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist will determine the presence of any known environmental hazards/nuisances on the site and if they can be removed through rehabilitation.
- Properties cannot be located in the right-of-way of any impending or planned public improvements. County/Consultant staff will assist in making this determination.
- The property cannot be located on a site that is endangered by mudslides, landslides or other natural or environmental hazards. If needed, the County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist will work with the homeowner to make this determination.
- The property may be located in the 100-year flood plain if the lowest finished floor level (verified by an elevation certificate provided by the homeowner) is above the base flood elevation and the property will be covered by flood insurance. The property must comply with Washington County's floodplain ordinance. All things

considered equal, properties located outside the 100-year flood plain will be given priority over properties located in the 100-year flood plain. County/Consultant staff will verify whether the home is in the flood plain.

- Properties that have a known infestation of bed bugs, fleas, mites or any other ectoparasites will not be evaluated until the infestation has been eliminated.
- If any ESFRLP Program representative for the County/Consultant suspects that the home is being used for criminal activity or the homeowners are engaging in criminal activity, the household will not be served. Properties that have been approved will be removed from the program if criminal activity is suspected.
- The property cannot have been repaired or rehabilitated with public funding of \$30,000 or more within the past 10 years without NCHFA approval.

**2023 Income Limits* for Washington County's
Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan Pool**

Number in Household	80% of Median Income
1	\$41,100
2	\$46,950
3	\$52,800
4	\$58,650
5	\$63,350
6	\$68,050
7	\$72,750
8	\$77,450

*Income limits are subject to change based on annually published HUD HOME Income Limits. This update will not require a re-approval by the governing authority.

How are applications ranked?

There are many more ESFRLP-eligible households (with eligible houses) than can be assisted with the available funds. Therefore, the County/Consultant have 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. Applications will be ranked according to which receive the most points.

**Priority Ranking System for the Washington County
2023 Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan Pool**

<i>Emergency Need</i>	<i>Points</i>
Threat of imminent eviction/removal; must meet Special Need(s) & income requirements: applications received at any time	8
<i>Special Needs (for definitions, see below)</i>	<i>Points</i>
Household with a child under age 6 with lead hazards in the home	4
Elderly Household (62 or older)	4
Disabled	4
Veteran Household	4
Multiple Disabled, Elderly or Veteran Household Members (more than 1)	4
<i>Income (See Income Table above)</i>	<i>Points</i>
Less than 30% of County Median Income	4
30% to 50% of County Median Income	4
50% to 80% of County Median Income	4

Definitions under ESFRLP are:

- *Child with lead hazards in the home:* a child below the age of six living or visiting weekly in the applicant house which contains lead hazards.
- *Elderly:* An individual aged 62 or older.
- *Disabled:* A person who has a physical, mental, or developmental disability that greatly limits one or more major life activities, has a document of such impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment
- *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 household, regardless of the time of occupancy); or non-immediate family member who has resided in the dwelling unit for at least 3 months prior to the submission of the family's application.
- *Veteran:* A person who is a military veteran, is defined as one who served in the active military, naval, or air service (i.e. Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard; as a commissioned officer of the Public Health Service; or as a commissioned officer of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration or its predecessors), and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable. Provide DD-214 form to demonstrate.
- *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 elevated based 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 homes. This may be documented with a doctor's letter or eviction notice.

Recipients of assistance under ESFRLP will be chosen by the above criteria without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and orientation), familial status, disability, and limited English proficiency.

What Are The Terms of Assistance Under ESFRLP?

The form of ESFRLP assistance is a 0% interest, forgivable loan to the homeowner covering the hard costs associated with the rehabilitation of the home, and a grant to the County/Consultant for the soft costs. These will be two separate documents or sets of documents.

The Loan: NCHFA will create loan documents for the homeowner(s) including a Promissory Note and Deed of Trust covering hard costs for the rehabilitation in an amount not to exceed \$40,000. This loan covering the hard costs remains 0% interest and forgivable at \$8,000 per year for as long as the owner resides in the home or until the balance is reduced to \$0. The term of the loan is dependent upon the loan amount and the number of years it takes to bring the balance of the loan to \$0 when forgiven at \$8,000 per year. For example, if the amount of the loan is \$37,452, then the term is

5 years (\$32,000 forgiven over the first 4 years and \$5,452 forgiven at the end of the 5th year}.

As long as the borrower lives in the home, no payments on the loan will be required. If the recipient prefers, the loan can be paid off at any time to NCHFA, either in installments or as a lump sum payment. Furthermore, under certain circumstances NCHFA may allow assumption or refinancing of the loan. Should an heir inherit the property and choose to live in the house as their permanent residence, they may assume the loan without being income eligible. However, the lien remains on the property as per the original loan terms. A buyer who may wish to buy the property to live in may assume the loan so long as they can document that they are income-eligible (:s; 80% **AMI**}. Default can occur if the property is sold or transferred to another person and/or if the borrower fails to use the home as a principal residence, without prior written approval of the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency.

The Grant: To pay for soft costs including application outreach/intake/management, environmental reviews/inspections/testing, and project assessment/documentation/estimating/bidding, NCHFA will create a Grant Agreement with the County/Consultant not to exceed \$10,000. The grant has no repayment or recovery terms.

What Kinds Of Work Will Be Done?

Each house selected for assistance must be rehabilitated to meet ESFRLP Rehabilitation Criteria. That means every house must, upon completion of the rehabilitation:

- meet the more stringent requirements of either NCHFA's Essential Property Standard or Washington County's Minimum Housing Code. These are "habitability standards" which set minimum standards for decent, safe, and sanitary living conditions. Additionally, the home must meet applicable Lead-Based Paint regulations 24 CFR part 35.
- retain no "imminent threats" to the health and safety of the home's occupants or to the home's "structural integrity". (An example of an imminent threat to occupants as well as to the home's structural integrity is an infestation of insects or a crawlspace that is too damp}.

These requirements are spelled out in full in the ESFRLP Administrator's Manual which you may view, at reasonable times, upon request, at the office of Albemarle Commission or anytime online at www.NCHFA.com.

In addition to the above items that must be done to satisfy NCHFA requirements, the scope of work may include approved items meant to reduce future maintenance and operational costs or to further protect homes from natural disasters and/or home modifications designed to enable greater accessibility for household members to function more independently as they age.

Once the rehabilitation is complete, major systems in the home that, with reasonable maintenance and normal use, should be capable of lasting another 5 years include: structural support, roofing, cladding, and weatherproofing, plumbing, electrical, and heating/cooling systems.

Contractors and sub-contractors performing work funded under ESFRLP are responsible for meeting all local requirements for permits and inspections. All work done under the program must be performed to meet NC State Residential Building Code standards. (This does not mean, however, that the whole house must be brought up to current Building Code Standards.)

What About Lead-based Paint?

Until it was discovered to be a health hazard, lead was used for centuries to make house paints. Now we know that lead exposure is a serious problem for everyone and especially small children. Selling lead paint was outlawed in 1978, but many older buildings still contain lead paint and children are still being poisoned.

Under ESFRLP, a lead hazard evaluation must be performed on every home selected for rehabilitation that was built before 1978. The specific type of evaluation and the appropriate lead hazard reduction work performed will depend on the total amount of Federal funds used to rehabilitate the home, as per 24 CFR part 35. If required, lead-based paint hazard reduction and/or abatement will be performed by contractors who are trained and certified to perform such work.

It may be necessary for the household to relocate during the construction process for protection against lead poisoning. If relocation is required, it shall be the responsibility of the homeowner to locate accommodations. The cost of reasonable, temporary relocation may be covered by ESFRLP funds and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Who Will Do the Work On the Homes?

The County/Consultant is obligated under ESFRLP to ensure that quality work is done at reasonable prices and that all work is contracted through a fair, open and competitive process. The Consultant, as part of its contract with the County, will act as the General Contractor.

To meet these requirements, the County/Consultant, as General Contractor for the program, will conduct a bid process that will allow all qualified sub-contractors to provide quotes, bids or proposals for the product or services needed on each home. For additional information about procurement and disbursement procedures, please refer to the Washington County ESFRLP Procurement and Disbursement Policy for the 2023 Cycle.

- At least three qualified sub-contractors will be invited to bid on each home and the lowest responsive and responsible bidder will be selected for the contract. Every reasonable effort will be made to receive at least three quotes, bids or proposals for the product or services needed.
- Homeowners who know of quality rehabilitation contractors who are not on the Approved Sub-Contractor list are welcome to invite them to apply.

What Are The Steps In The Process, From Application To Completion?

You now have information about how to apply for the Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan Pool (ESFRLP) and what type of work can be done through the Program. Let's go through the steps for getting the work done:

- 1. Completing a pre-application form:** Homeowners who wish to apply for assistance must complete a Pre-Application form. Apply by contacting Albemarle Commission at (252) 426-5753. Proof of ownership, income and special needs will be required. Those who have applied for housing assistance from the County/Consultant in the past will not automatically be reconsidered and must complete a new pre-application form.
- 2. Client Referral and Support Services:** Many homeowners seeking assistance through the Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan Pool may also need other services. If the County/Consultant ESFRLP staff meet the homeowner during the application process, they will provide contact information for the resources and programs available in Washington County. With the homeowner's permission, a staff person will follow up with the homeowner concerning available services in the referral network.
- 3. Preliminary inspection:** The County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist will visit the homes of eligible households to determine the need and feasibility of the home for rehabilitation. Homeowners must inform staff of any known pest infestations prior to the visit. The County/Consultant has the right to deny an application based on health and safety concerns that may put their staff and/or contractors at risk.
- 4. Screening of applicants:** Applications will be ranked by the County/Consultant based on the priority system outlined on page 4 and the feasibility of rehabilitating the house. The County/Consultant will then submit to NCHFA an ESFRLP Loan Application and Reservation Request for each potential borrower for approval. Household income will be verified for program purposes only (information will be kept confidential). NCHFA will verify ownership of the property by conducting a title search.
- 5. Written agreement:** A HOME Owner Agreement, between the homeowner and the County/Consultant, will be executed as part of the Loan Application and Reservation Request procedure (that formally commits funds to a dwelling unit). This agreement will certify that the property is the principal residence of the owner, that the post-rehab value of the property will not exceed 95% of the 203(b) limits established by HUD and defines the ESFRLP maximum amount and form of assistance being provided to the homeowner, the scope of work to be performed, the date of completion and the rehabilitation criteria and standards to be met.
- 6. Pre-rehab inspection & unit evaluation:** The County/Consultant Rehabilitation 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. The owner should report any known problems such as electrical short circuits, blinking lights, roof leaks, etc. Each unit will be evaluated for energy-saving

opportunities such as air-sealing and duct-sealing as well as for environmental concerns, such as lead-based paint hazards, radon, and asbestos.

7. **Work write-up:** The County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist will prepare complete and detailed work specifications (known as the "work write-up"). A final cost estimate will also be prepared by the County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist and held in confidence until bids are received from contractors.
8. **Lead and Other Testing:** The County/Consultant will arrange for a certified firm to inspect all pre-1978 constructed homes for potential lead hazards (required) and asbestos hazards (as deemed necessary by the County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist). All homes will be tested for radon. The owner will receive information covering the results of the tests and any corrective actions that will be needed as part of the rehabilitation.
9. **Bidding:** The work write-up and bid documents will be conveyed to sub-contractors from the vendor's list. Sub-contractors will inspect the property and prepare bid proposals. Each sub-contractor will need access to all parts of the house in order to prepare a bid.
10. **Contractor selection:** The County/Consultant will select the sub-contractor(s) and the homeowner will be notified of 1) the selection of the winning bid, 2) the amount of the winning bid, and 3) the amount of the project cost estimate.
11. **Loan closing and contract execution:** Rehabilitation contract documents will be executed by the homeowner and the County/Consultant prior to the commencement of any construction. Loan documents (Promissory Note and Deed of Trust) will be prepared by NCHFA as the lender and executed by the homeowner. The County/Consultant will facilitate the loan closing and recordation of the documents and will forward the recorded documents to NCHFA. By law, homeowners have the right to hire legal representation of their choosing for the loan closing. If a homeowner does not have "representation" at the closing, an NCHFA "Legal Advice Disclosure" form must be signed.
12. **Pre-construction conference:** A pre-construction conference will be held. At this time, the homeowner, contractor, and County/Contractor ESFRLP program representatives will discuss the details of the work to be completed. Starting and ending dates will be finalized, along with any special arrangements such as weekend or evening work hours and disposition of items to be removed from the home. The County/Consultant will issue a verbal "proceed order" formally instructing the contractor to commence work by the agreed-upon date.
13. **Construction:** Sub-contractors are responsible for obtaining and posting any necessary permits for the project before beginning work. County/Consultant ESFRLP Program staff will closely monitor the sub-contractor during the construction period and local Code Enforcement Officials will inspect the work when applicable. To protect personal property, the homeowner will be responsible for working with the sub-contractor toward clearing work areas of personal property as

needed. The sub-contractor will be responsible for all clearing and cleaning activities necessary due to construction activities.

14. **Change Orders:** All changes to the scope of work must be approved by the owner, the sub-contractor, County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist, and reduced to writing as a contract amendment ("change order"). The owner and two County/Consultant personnel must execute any change order agreements to the construction contract.
15. **Post-construction conference:** Following construction, the County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist will confer with the Homeowner to deliver owner's manuals, warranties on equipment, and materials to the homeowner. The County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist will explain operating and maintenance requirements for the new equipment, materials, and appliances and discuss general maintenance of the home. The Homeowner and the County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist will sign a Certificate of Satisfaction.
16. **Closeout:** When the County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist and the Homeowner are satisfied that the contract has been fulfilled, the County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist will sign off on the Certification of Final Inspection. All material and workmanship will be guaranteed for a period of one year from the date of completion of the work.
17. **Final loan amount determination:** If, upon completion of all rehabilitation work, the contract price has changed due to the effect of change orders and there is a need to modify the loan, NCHFA will prepare an estoppel for a loan reduction or modification agreement for a loan increase as necessary at the time of closeout of the unit. The loan will remain the property of NCHFA, with original documents remaining there for storage and "servicing". Please note that it is the responsibility of the homeowner to record an estoppel if they wish this to be reflected in the Deed of Trust.
18. **The warranty period:** It is extremely important that any issues with work performed be reported in writing by the homeowner to the County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist or another representative as soon as possible. All bona fide defects in materials and workmanship reported within one year of completion of construction will be corrected free of charge.

How do I request an application?

Contact:

Nita Criner
Housing Rehabilitation
Administrative Assistant
Albemarle Commission
512 S Church St
Hertford, NC 27944
Phone: (252) 426-5753

Curtis Potter
County Manager/Attorney
Washington County
116 Adams Street
PO Box 1007
Plymouth NC 27962
Phone: (252) 793-5823

Is there a procedure for dealing with complaints, disputes, and appeals? Although the application process and rehabilitation guidelines are meant to be as fair as possible, the County/Consultant realizes that there is still a chance that some applicants or participants may dispute decisions, work completed or other issues. 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 Michael Ervin, Albemarle Commission Executive Director, within ten days of the initial decision and voice their concern.
2. If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the decision, the detailed complaint should be put into writing. A written appeal must be made within 15 business days of the initial decision on an application.
3. The County will respond in writing to any complaints or appeals within 15 business days of receiving written comments.

During the rehabilitation process:

1. If the homeowner feels that construction is not being completed according to the contract, he/she must inform the County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist, preferably in writing.
2. The County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist will inspect the work in question. If he finds that the work is not being completed according to the contract, the County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist will review the contract with the sub-contractor and ask them to correct the problem.
3. If the County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist finds that the work is being completed according to contract, the complaint will be added to the applicant's file. The County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist and the homeowner will discuss the concern and the reason for the County/Consultant Rehabilitation Specialist's decision.
4. If problems persist, the homeowner must put the concern in writing and a mediation conference may be convened by the County.
5. Should the mediation conference fail to resolve the dispute, the Executive Director will render a written final decision.

Final Appeal:

After following the above procedures, any applicant or homeowner who remains dissatisfied with the final decision may appeal in writing to Michael Handley, NCHFA, PO Box 28066, Raleigh, NC 27611-8066, (919) 877-5627.

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 County/Consultant employees who are directly involved in the program, the North

Carolina Housing Finance Agency, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and auditors.

What about conflicts of interest? No employee or board member of the County/Consultant, or entity contracting with the County/Consultant, who exercises any functions or responsibilities with respect to the ESFRLP project shall have any interest, direct or indirect, in any contract or subcontract for work to be performed with project funding, either for themselves or those with whom they have family or business ties, during their tenure or for one year thereafter. Relatives of the County/Consultant employees or of County/Consultant board members and others closely identified with the County/Consultant, may be approved for rehabilitation assistance only upon public disclosure before the County/Consultant Board of Commissioners and with written permission from NCHFA.

What about favoritism? All activities under ESFRLP, including rating and ranking applications, inviting bids, selecting sub-contractors and resolving complaints, will be conducted in a fair, open and non-discriminatory manner, entirely without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex (including gender identity and orientation), familial status, disability and limited English proficiency.

Outreach Efforts of the ESFRLP Program

The County/Consultant makes citizens aware of the ESFRLP program and other housing rehabilitation opportunities through various service providers and specific outreach efforts. At a minimum, the County/Consultant will advertise or publish information about the Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan Pool Program via the County/Consultant website and Facebook page.

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

Nita Criner
Housing Rehabilitation
Administrative Assistant
Albemarle Commission
512 S Church St
Hertford, NC 27944
Phone: (252) 426-5753

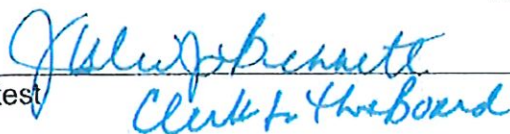
Curtis Potter
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116 Adams Street
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Phone: (252) 793-5823

This Assistance Policy is adopted this 26th day of JUNE, 2024.



Curtis Potter, Manager/Attorney
Washington County

Attest



Clerk to the Board