

Albemarle Commission Assistance Policy For the 2024 Cycle of the Urgent Repair Program

Albemarle Commission Service Area:
Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hyde, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell, Washington

What is the Urgent Repair Program?

Albemarle Commission has been awarded \$264,000 by the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency ("NCHFA") under the 2024 cycle of the Urgent Repair Program ("URP24"). This program provides funds to assist very-low and low-income households with special needs in addressing housing conditions that 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 **22 households** will be assisted under URP24.

This Assistance Policy describes who is eligible to apply for assistance under URP24, 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 Commission has designed this URP24 project to be fair, open, and consistent with the Commission'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 and Agency funds.

Eligibility To be eligible for assistance under URP24, applicants:

- 1) must reside within the Albemarle Commission URP24 service area and own and occupy the home in need of repair
- 2) must have a household income that does not exceed 50% of the statewide 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 lead hazards in the home)
- 4) must have urgent repair needs, which cannot be met through other state- or federally-funded housing assistance programs

URP24 Income Limits* for Albemarle Commission

Number in Household	30% of Median (very-low income)	50% of Median (low income)
1	\$18,650	\$31,050
2	\$21,300	\$35,450
3	\$23,950	\$39,900
4	\$26,600	\$44,300
5	\$28,750	\$47,850
6	\$30,900	\$51,400
7	\$33,000	\$54,950
8	\$35,150	\$58,500

*Income limits are subject to change based on annually published HUD HOME Limits and will be updated each year. This update will not require a re-approval of the governing authority.

Outreach Efforts of the Urgent Repair Program

Albemarle Commission will advertise or publish an article about the Urgent Repair Program on its website, Facebook page, and at senior centers throughout the service area, with the Commission's partner referral agencies, and on the Commission's website.

Selection of applicants

The Commission will follow the priority system outlined below to rank eligible applicants and 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 needs and income. The applications will be ranked according to which receives the most points.

Priority Ranking System for Albemarle Commission's URP24

<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
Child under six years of age with lead hazards in the home	2
<i>Income (See Income Table above)</i>	<i>Points</i>
Less than 30% of Albemarle Commission Median Income	10
30% to 50% of Albemarle Commission Median Income	5

Under NCHFA Program Guidelines, a minimum of 50% of households assisted must have incomes which are less than 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 URP24.

Recipients of assistance under the URP24 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 URP24 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 homes.
- *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 lead hazards in the home:* a child below the age of six living in the applicant's house which contains lead hazards.

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 service area and provide contact information for partner agencies as appropriate. 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 URP24? The Albemarle Commission 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 **\$3,000 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 Albemarle Commission's rehabilitation specialist. There is no minimum to the amount of the loan; however, **the maximum lifetime limit according to the guidelines of URP24 is \$12,000.**

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 Albemarle Commission's URP. Please understand that all deficiencies in a home will likely not be able to be repaired with the available funds. All work that is completed under URP24 must meet or exceed NC Residential Building Code.

Who will do the work on the homes? The Albemarle Commission is obligated under URP24 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 Albemarle Commission will invite bids only from sub-contractors who are part of an "approved sub-contractors' registry". Please request a copy of the Albemarle Commission's Procurement and Disbursement Policy for further information.

(Homeowners who know of quality rehabilitation sub-contractors that are not on the Albemarle Commission's Approved Sub-Contractors Registry are welcome to invite them to apply.)

If possible, a minimum of three approved sub-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 Albemarle Commission's URP24, what work can be done, and who will do it, let's go through all the major steps in the process:

- 1. Completing an Application form:** Homeowners who wish to apply for assistance can contact the Albemarle Commission at (252) 426-5753 to apply from the 1st to the 15th of every month. Proof of ownership and income will be required. Those who have applied for housing assistance from the Albemarle Commission in the past will not automatically be reconsidered. A new application will need to be submitted.
- 2. Preliminary inspection:** The Albemarle Commission's Rehabilitation Specialist will visit the homes of potential loan recipients to determine the need and feasibility of repairs/modifications.
- 3. Screening of applicants:** Applications will be rated and ranked by the Albemarle Commission based on the priority system outlined on page 2. Household income will be verified for program purposes only (information will be kept confidential). Ownership of the property will be verified along with other rating factors. From this review, the most qualified applicants will be chosen according to the priority system described above. The households to be assisted will be selected monthly after the 15th of the month, and applicants will be notified of their application status by the last business day of the month.
- 4. 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.
- 5. Work write-up:** The Albemarle Commission's 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, if any. The owner should report any known problems such as electrical short circuits, blinking lights, roof leaks, and the like. The Rehabilitation Specialist will prepare complete and detailed work specifications (also known as the "work write-up" or "scope of work"). A final cost estimate will also be

prepared by the Rehabilitation Specialist and held in confidence until bidding is completed.

6. **Formal agreement:** After approval of the work write-up/scope of work, 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.
7. **Bidding:** The work write-up/scope of work and bid documents will be shared with a minimum of three sub-contractors on the Approved Sub-contractors' Registry who will be given one week in which to inspect the property and prepare bid proposals. The names of the invited sub-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 Albemarle Commission's office at a specified date and time.
8. **Sub-contractor selection:** Within 24 hours of the bid opening and 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 Albemarle Commission'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.
9. **Execution of loan and contract:** The loan will be executed as well as the Urgent Repair Program Contract for Home Repairs/Modifications (Construction Contract - Bid) prior to work beginning on the project. This contract will be between the sub-contractor, the homeowner, and the Albemarle Commission.
10. **Pre-construction conference:** A pre-construction meeting will be held. At this time, the homeowner and program representatives can 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.).
11. **Construction:** The sub-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 sub-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 if required by the guidelines of URP24. The homeowner will be responsible for working with the sub-contractor and Albemarle Commission toward protecting personal property by clearing work areas as much as practicable.
12. **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 sub-contractor, and two representatives of the Albemarle Commission. 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 Albemarle Commission, 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 Albemarle Commission and conveyed to the owner.

13. Payments to sub-contractor: The sub-contractor will be paid following inspection of and satisfactory completion of all items on the work write-up and change orders, if any, as outlined in the Albemarle Commission's Procurement and Disbursement Policy.

14. Post-construction meeting: Following construction, the Rehabilitation Specialist will sit down with the homeowner one last time. At this meeting, any owner's manuals and warranties on equipment will be turned over to the homeowner. The Rehabilitation 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.

15. 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 on the 1st of each month.
- Applications must be turned in at the Albemarle Commission office by 5:00 PM on the 15th of each month, or the following business day as applicable.
- Households selected from applications after the 15th of each month and will be notified by the last business day of the month.

How do I request an application? Just contact:

Albemarle Commission
512 S. Church Street
Hertford, NC 27944
(252) 426-5753

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 Albemarle Commission realizes that there is still a chance that some applicants or participants may feel that they were 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 Albemarle Commission Executive Director within five days of the initial decision and voice their concern. If the applicant remains dissatisfied with the decision, a detailed complaint should be put into writing.
2. A written appeal must be made within 10 business days of the initial decision on an application.
3. The Albemarle Commission 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 per the contract, he/she must inform the contractor and the Rehabilitation Specialist.
2. The Rehabilitation Specialist will inspect the work in question. If it is found that the work is not being completed according to the contract, the Rehabilitation 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 Rehabilitation Specialist and facilitated by the Albemarle Commission's Executive Director.
4. Should the mediation conference fail to resolve the dispute, the Executive Director will render a written final decision.
5. If the Rehabilitation Specialist finds that the work is being completed according to the contract, the complaint will be noted and the Rehabilitation Specialist and the homeowner will discuss the concern and the reason for the Rehabilitation Specialist's decision.

Will the personal information provided remain confidential? Yes. All information in applicant files will remain confidential. Access to information will be provided only to Albemarle Commission employees directly involved in the program, NCHFA and auditors.

What about conflicts of interest? No officer, employee or other public official of the Albemarle Commission, or member of the Albemarle Commission Board of Delegates, or entity contracting with the Albemarle Commission that exercises any functions or responsibilities with respect to URP24 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 Albemarle Commission employees, Board of Delegates and others closely identified with the Albemarle Commission, may be approved for rehabilitation assistance only upon public disclosure before the Albemarle Commission Board of Delegates and written permission from NCHFA.

What about favoritism? All activities under URP24, 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 URP24? Questions should be addressed to:

Ryan Albertson
Rehabilitation Specialist
Albemarle Commission
512 S. Church St., Hertford NC 27944
(252)426-5753

Michael Ervin
Executive Director
Albemarle Commission
512 S. Church St., Hertford NC 27944
(252) 426-5753

This Assistance Policy is adopted this 15th day of August, 2024.

ALBEMARLE COMMISSION

BY: Michael O. Ervin

Attested by: [Signature]