BACK@HOME
NORTH CAROLINA

Back@Home Handbook
Version One
October 12, 2018

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Back@Home North Carolina Overview

In disaster recovery, displaced homeowners and leaseholders are eligible for Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Individual Disaster Assistance to return to their housing status prior to the disaster. The remaining disaster survivors are not eligible for FEMA Individual Disaster Assistance for housing resources and have no clear path out of disaster shelters. These include families with children, elderly persons, and households with special needs. Many of these vulnerable households were precariously housed prior to the storm and are at risk of homelessness now. As disaster shelters close, they have no housing options. Without immediate assistance, most will become homeless and enter the already strained homeless response system, with their traumatic situations continuing.

After Hurricane Florence, Governor Cooper designated housing this vulnerable population as a priority for the State and provided $3 million to launch Back@Home North Carolina for what will become a $12 million response. A team of State officials from the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) and the NC Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA), federal advisors, the North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness, Managed Care Organizations, and local nonprofits came together to implement a recovery program to serve those with no path out of the disaster shelters.

Using a rapid rehousing approach developed after Hurricane Harvey in Houston, Texas with the Homes@Harvey program and Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, Back@Home North Carolina will provide these families with the stability to recover from disasters and increase their resiliency in the event of future disasters.

Eligibility

Households that were displaced from the place they were living by a natural disaster and have no other source of housing assistance are eligible for Back@Home North Carolina. Back@Home may provide housing navigation services to households with other sources of housing assistance, including FEMA Individual Assistance, if they have significant barriers to finding housing. Homeowners are not eligible for Back@Home.

Most households that were denied FEMA Individual Assistance are eligible, though some may receive housing assistance from another source and should not be provided housing assistance by Back@Home. If a household qualifies for another source of housing assistance but there is a delay in receiving that funding, Back@Home housing assistance may be used as a bridge to house the household. Once the other housing assistance is available, the household will be transitioned off of Back@Home assistance to that other funding stream.

Some households approved for FEMA Individual assistance may only receive money to replace damaged personal property or other very limited amounts of assistance. These people can receive Back@Home assistance if they have no other source of housing assistance.

Due to the ongoing determination process for FEMA assistance, Back@Home may serve individuals with pending FEMA claims. In those instances, if the household is approved for FEMA Individual Assistance for housing resources, the family will be transitioned off of Back@Home assistance and begin using their own resources to support their housing.

There may be households that need Back@Home assistance but initially seem ineligible. Rehousing Agencies should contact NCCEH to discuss potential exceptions to Back@Home eligibility.

Target Population

Phase One

In Phase One of the Back@Home response, Rehousing Agencies will target households in disaster shelters or who resided in disaster shelters but now live in unsheltered, unsafe, and/or uninhabitable locations who are not receiving FEMA Individual Disaster Assistance, who may be receiving limited FEMA assistance, or who have an ongoing FEMA pending status and do not have a clear path to housing.

Phase Two

After Phase One, Rehousing Agencies will move to Phase Two. In Phase Two of the Back@Home response, Rehousing Agencies will target households who are in the homeless system due to the disaster and to households experiencing homelessness or were precariously housed when the disaster took place.

Rehousing Agencies

Rehousing Agencies are NC DHHS- and NCCEH-approved funded agencies that are responsible for administering housing navigation, housing financial assistance, and case management for the households in their catchment areas. Rehousing Agencies are tasked with moving eligible households into units as quickly as possible and providing ongoing financial and case management services for each household for up to six months.

Designated Rehousing Agencies

Rehousing Agencies are currently:
- Eastpointe
- Trillium Health Resources
- Southeastern Family Violence Center
- Volunteers of America
- First Fruit Ministries

Rehousing Agency Leadership Contact Information

Agency	Contact Name	Email Address	Phone Number
Volunteers of America	Tiana Joyner	TJoyner@voacarolinas.org	919-799-0440
Eastpointe	Lynnette Gordon	lgordon@eastpointe.net	910-298-7036
Trillium Health Resources	Amy Modlin	Amy.Modlin@trilliumnc.org	1-866-998-2597
Southeastern Family Violence Center	Emily Locklear	sfvc@ncrrbiz.com	910-740-4319
First Fruit Ministries	Lee Anna Stoker	Lstoker@firstfruitministries.org	910-612-9438

Rehousing Assigned Territory
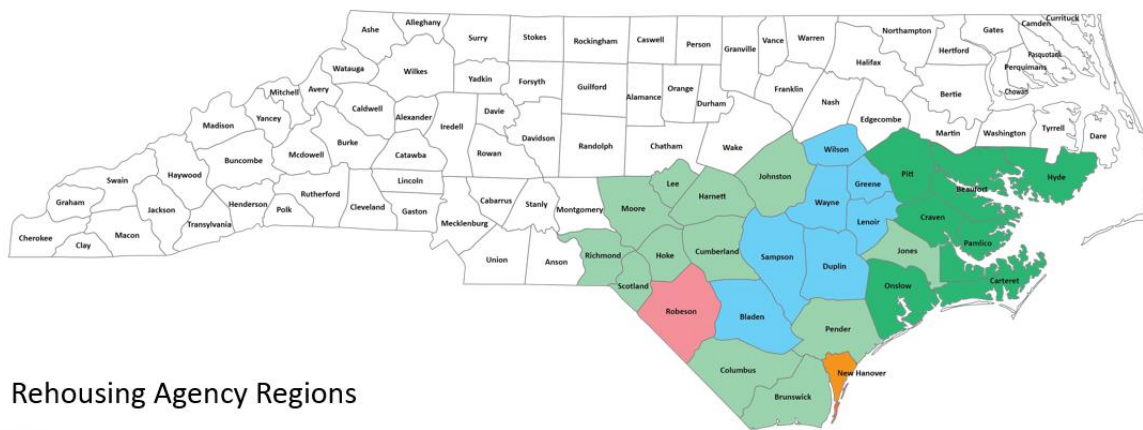
Rehousing Agency Regions

- Volunteers of America
- Eastpointe
- Southeast Family Violence Center
- First Fruit Ministries
- Trillium

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For each county in the disaster declared area, a primary Rehousing Agency is assigned. If possible, secondary Rehousing Agencies are assigned to counties with disaster shelters as of October 1, 2018. The primary Rehousing Agency will be the lead for all activities in the county with the secondary agency acting as a backup resource to assist if the primary Rehousing Agency is unable to receive a referral at that time. Territories are assigned as follows to date:

County	Primary Rehousing Agencies	Secondary Rehousing Agencies	Disaster Shelter (Y/N)
Beaufort	Trillium		No
Bladen	Eastpointe	Volunteers of America	Yes
Brunswick	Volunteers of America	Trillium	Yes
Carteret	Trillium	Volunteers of America	Yes
Columbus	Volunteers of America	Trillium	Yes
Craven	Trillium	Volunteers of America	Yes
Craven	Trillium		No
Cumberland	Volunteers of America		Yes
Duplin	Eastpointe	Volunteers of America	Yes
Greene	Eastpointe		No
Harnett	Volunteers of America		No
Hoke	Volunteers of America		No
Hyde	Trillium		No
Johnston	Volunteers of America		No
Jones	Volunteers of America	Trillium	Yes
Lee	Volunteers of America		No
Lenoir	Eastpointe		No
Moore	Volunteers of America		No
New Hanover	First Fruit Ministries	Trillium	Yes
Onslow	Trillium	Volunteers of America	Yes

Pamlico	Trillium	Volunteers of America	Yes
Pender	Volunteers of America	Trillium	Yes
Pitt	Trillium		No
Richmond	Volunteers of America		No
Robeson	Southeastern Family Violence Center	Eastpointe	Yes
Sampson	Eastpointe		No
Scotland	Volunteers of America		No
Wayne	Eastpointe		No
Wilson	Eastpointe		No

In Phase One of the program Rehousing Agencies will focus on serving the households in disaster shelters within their territories. As Back@Home moves to serving Phase Two households, Rehousing Agencies will coordinate identifying, assessing, housing, and providing services to household in their territories.

Back@Home Assistance Payments and Agency Reimbursement

Eligible Expenses

Back@Home is a disaster response housing program. The State is requesting reimbursement from FEMA Public Assistance to secure non-congregate shelter in community-based housing (i.e. housing units) for Back@Home participant households. The FEMA funding allows for 6 months of housing financial assistance and services to provide non-congregate shelter for households.

The NC Housing Finance Agency (NCHFA) is the paying agent on behalf of NC DHHS to reimburse re-housing agencies for housing navigation services, case management and financial assistance expenses for Back@Home. Rehousing Agencies will be reimbursed for assistance provided to households and staff costs through NCHFA's reimbursement process (details to follow).

Eligible activities for reimbursement include:
- Housing application fees
- Utilities
- Rent payments
- Security deposits
- Furniture and household goods
- Case Management
- Housing Navigation Services
- Supporting staff costs for Rehousing Agencies

Requisition Process

NCHFA will provide a full list of eligible expenditures, required documentation, and requisition process instructions to Rehousing Agencies at a later date.

Start-Up Funds

Rehousing Agencies will be provided an initial payment of $50,000 from NC DHHS to cover startup costs and rental payments made before the NCHFA reimbursement process is operational.

Household Assessment and Referral

Disaster Shelter Household Assessments

On October 1, 2018, assessment teams began assessing all households remaining in disaster shelters to determine how many households in the shelter may be eligible for Back@Home assistance or other housing assistance programs. An initial assessment was done for each member of the household including the head of household, other adult members, and children. Assessment team leads retained the paper assessment forms following the privacy protocols of their agencies and entered key data points into a Smartsheet form to populate a Back@Home by-name list.

As the Back@Home program begins to take referrals from the community, households will be assessed by Rehousing Agencies in the field using the paper form and entered into the by-name list via the Smartsheet form.

By-Name List

The by-name list of all people who received Back@Home assessments is only available to approved staff from Rehousing Agencies and state Back@Home partners. If a Rehousing Agency or partner agency would like to access the by-name list, email Ehren Dohler at ehren@ncceh.org to request access.

Rehousing Agencies are responsible for attempting to serve everyone on the by-name list who were assessed for Back@Home in their catchment area. Agency staff should use the by-name list to prioritize people for Back@Home housing assistance and housing navigation services and to track their progress in housing households on the list.

By-Name List Protocols

Rehousing Agencies will also use the list to identify and prioritize referrals, track household progress, and report household placement in units.

The by-name list will be used by leadership and partner agencies to track the Rehousing Agencies' progress in placing units and provide updates to State leadership, funders, and FEMA about the Back@Home program.

Access: Each Rehousing Agency will have one staff person who is designated as an editor for the by-name list Smartsheet spreadsheet. Other staff may be designated as "viewers" to see the by-name list information but are unable to make changes to the spreadsheet. To request changes to agency staff access to the by-name list, agencies need to contact Ehren Dohler at ehren@ncceh.org.

Privacy: The by-name list contains identifying information for the head of households that they have agreed to share for housing and service coordination. For this reason, privacy protocols need to be followed by all who access the list. These protocols include:
- Only open the by-name list on password-protected, secure networks
- Close the browser window with the by-name list if you walk away from your computer
- If you print a version of the by-name list, store it in a locked file cabinet or office and shred it once you are done with the list
- Sharing with client consent should only be done with Back@Home partners and landlord agencies to coordinate housing

Data Entry: It is imperative that the by-name list data remain accurate for coordination of services and reporting to Back@Home leadership and funders. Rehousing Agencies will update the list immediately as they move households into units.
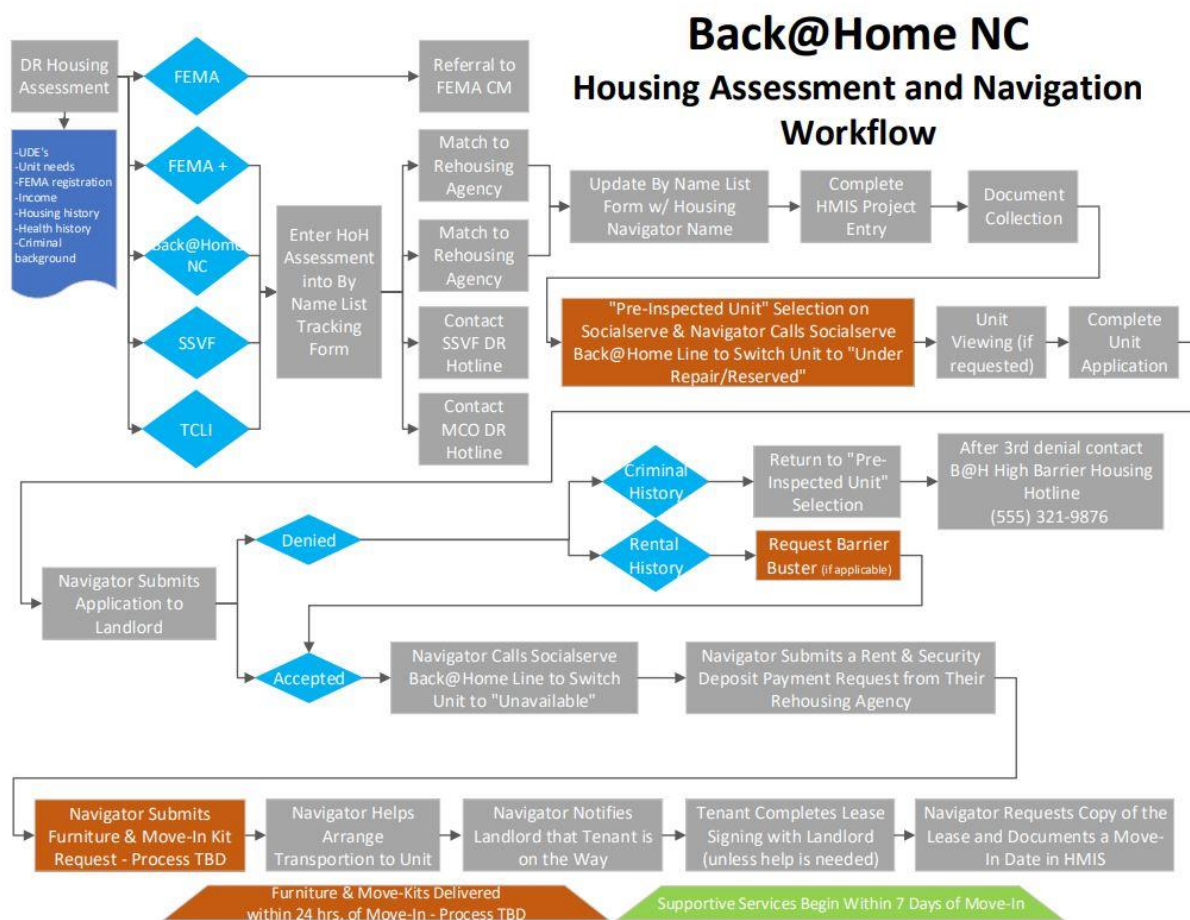
All Rehousing Agencies will update by-name list information for each household once a week by midnight on Friday, including:

Spreadsheet Column Title	Data Entered
Date Assigned	Date that the household is assigned to Rehousing Agency staff to begin navigation services
Assigned Navigator	Name of assigned Rehousing Agency staff that is providing navigation services
Assigned Rehousing Agency	Name of the Rehousing Agency that is overseeing navigation and case management services for the household. This could be either the primary or secondary Rehousing Agency.
Current Location	The current location of the household. This list includes: Disaster Shelter, Homeless Shelter/TH, Hotel/Motel, Staying w/ Family/Friends, Placed in Unit, Unknown, and Unsheltered.
Move-In Status	The current status of the household in locating and moving into housing. This list includes: Not Started, Attempting to Contact, Made Contact, Housing Search, Unit Identified, Applied, Lease Approved, and Moved-in!.
Unit	This column is locked to sheet administrators for specific rehousing purposes. If you have questions, please contact Emily at emily@ncceh.org.
Housing Move-In Date	The date that the household moved into their unit.
Referred to High Need Navigation	The date that the household was referred to High Need Navigation services (see details below).
Household Current Location by County	The county where the household is currently located.
Disaster Program Match	The disaster program that the household is currently matched with. This list includes Back@Home, FEMA + Navigation, SSVF, TCLI, FEMA Pending, DSS, None, Alliance, and DHHS Aging Services. This column should be updated as a household's eligibility for other housing programs and FEMA Individual Assistance change.
FEMA Application Status	The current status of the household's FEMA Individual Assistance claim.

Housing Navigation Services

The first phase of serving eligible households is identifying and placing them into units in the community. Housing navigation services include placing eligible households into housing including matching households to rental units, completing rental applications, collecting documentation for funders, tracking household progress in data systems, signing lease agreements, and coordinating move in kits with NC DHHS.

Many of our Rehousing Agencies have experience in locating units for households, so agencies are encouraged to follow their internal protocols if those produce successful outcomes. Below is a suggested navigation workflow to move households into units in the community as quickly as possible.

Suggested Workflow

Referrals: Once an assessment is completed and a household is found to be eligible for Back@Home, Rehousing Agencies will receive referrals via the by-name list. Once a rehousing agency staff member is assigned, they will update the Smartsheet with their name, the date assigned, and household status. Housing navigators will meet with the households as quickly as possible.

Documentation Collection: Housing navigators will be responsible for collecting the initial documentation as outlined in the Appendix so that the Rehousing Agency can enter the household into HMIS and initiate the housing search process. All paper files must be stored in a central location in a locked filing cabinet or locked room and need to be maintained by the Rehousing Agency until instructed by Back@Home leadership.

Unit Selection: Housing navigators will then match the household to a unit. Units can be from existing landlord relationships if the unit meets the requirements of the Back@Home program (see Unit Collection section) or from the NC Housing Search Back@Home unit database. Rehousing Agency staff will assist households in identifying the available unit that best meets their needs while recognizing that the recent disaster may limit choices.

Application Submission: Once a unit is identified by the household, the Rehousing Agency staff will put a time-limited hold on the unit in the database by emailing dit@socialserve.com and complete the rental application. Staff will submit the application for the household and follow up with the landlord to get an application decision as quickly as possible.

Application Denial: If a household's rental application is denied for a financial reason or for criminal history, the Rehousing Agency staff will need to negotiate with the landlord to see if they can waive the normal screening requirements. If the landlord is not willing to negotiate, Rehousing Agency staff will assist the household in finding and applying to another unit. If a household has 3 unsuccessful attempts in applying for units, Rehousing Agency staff will refer the household for High Need Housing Navigation (see below).

Application Approval: If a household's rental application is approved, the Rehousing Agency staff needs to schedule the lease signing and remove the unit from the NC Housing Search Back@Home unit database inventory by emailing dit@socialserve.com.

Deposit and/or Rent Payment: Staff will trigger the Rehousing Agency's process to initiate deposit and/or rental payment for the unit.

Utilities Payment: Rehousing Agencies will assist the household to set-up utilities in the household's name. The Rehousing Agency will provide the utilities payment, for up to 6 months, and request reimbursement from NCHFA.

Furniture and Household Move-In Needs: As the process to order furniture for households is developed, Rehousing Agencies will need to assist in providing basic furniture and household

move-in needs for households. Updates will be provided on a process to connect households to move-in kits.

Transportation and Lease Signing: Rehousing Agency staff will coordinate with the landlord to schedule a lease signing and transport the household to the lease signing. Landlords will be contacted prior to transporting the household. At the lease signing, housing navigators will obtain necessary documentation as identified in the Appendix.

After the lease signing, Rehousing Agency staff will coordinate transportation of the household and their goods to the unit. Rehousing Agency staff will also record the move in status and date on the by-name list and in HMIS.

Initiate Case Management: After households are housed, Rehousing Agency staff will refer the household to case management services or begin providing case management services to the household themselves. Case management services will include connecting households to community resources, job training, education, and local transportation services.

Rehousing Resources

Back@Home partners are providing Rehousing Agencies with several tools to enhance their ability to move households into units.

Unit Collection

Unit Requirements and Support

A vital part of housing navigator services is locating available, affordable units in the community for eligible households. All units that will be used for the Back@Home program must have:
1. Passed HUD Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection
2. Fair Market Rent (FMR) and Rent Reasonableness check
3. Debarment check

Options to Locate a Unit:

Option A: Rehousing Agencies locate a unit and can quickly get a no-cost HQS inspection done, check for FMR and rent reasonableness and debarment on their own, then they are encouraged to do so and retain the documentation of these efforts including inspection reports, FMR check, rent reasonableness paperwork, and debarment records.

Option B: If Rehousing Agencies are able to locate a unit, but need help in completing the HQS inspection, FMR/Rent Reasonableness and debarment checks, they can submit the Unit Support Request Form via Smartsheet. Rehousing Agencies will need to create a login for this form and then submit. If the unit has been matched to a particular household, then NCHFA will notify the Rehousing Agency if the unit meets requirements. Otherwise, the unit will be listed on Socialserve Back@Home Database (see below).

FMR and Rent Reasonableness

Rehousing Agency staff should attempt to place households in units that are listed at or below the FY 2019 HUD Fair Market Rent (FMR) for the county (see appendix for FMRs by county and unit size). If a unit has rent higher than FMR, the rent may be checked for rent reasonableness. If the rent is reasonable, the household can proceed to apply for the unit. If the rent is not reasonable, but is at or below 110% of FMR, the household can proceed to apply for the unit. Rehousing Agencies may request an exception to the aforementioned rent limits in the following circumstances:

1) The county has no available units with rent at or below 110% of FMR or with rent that is reasonable OR
2) Units with reasonable rent or rent that is at or below FMR do not meet the households' needs. For instance, the unit is too far from a job or it is not accessible due to mobility concerns or other functional needs.

To request a rent exception, the Rehousing Agency staff will:

1) Document, using the Socialserve Back@Home Unit Database, that there are no available units in the area at 110% of FMR or are rent reasonable OR
2) Document the household's specific needs that require a higher rent payment and document a unit on Socialserve that meets those needs at the requested rent payment level.

The Rehousing Agency staff will submit the request for rent exception to NCHFA, and NCHFA will promptly contact DHHS to review the request and provide authorization. An NCHFA contact will be provided at a later date.

Housing Inspections

As stated above, all units need to pass a HUD Housing Quality Standards (HQS) inspection. Some Rehousing Agency staff are able to do these inspections in the field, only if at no cost, and are encouraged to do so. However, if a Rehousing Agency needs assistance with HQS inspections, staff can submit a Unit Support Form and NC HFA will coordinate inspections with a contracted private housing inspection company. The private housing inspection company will inspect units that are either referred by Rehousing Agencies or located by Socialserve. Additional inspectors and process will be considered if current process does not meet need.

The inspectors will notify NC HFA if the unit passes inspection or if it does not, what repairs need to be made to get the unit to HQS standards. For units that need repairs, NC HFA will notify NC DHHS. Based on costs and the need for units in particular locations, NC DHHS will decide if they will pay for the repairs to meet HQS standards. If approved for repairs, NC DHHS will coordinate with a vendor in the area to complete the repairs to the unit. Once repairs are

made, the inspection company will re-inspect the unit and let NC HFA know that it passed HQS standards.

Socialserve Back@Home Unit Database

In order to identify units for households quickly, Socialserve will be recruiting landlords and maintaining a private database of units for Rehousing Agencies. Socialserve will assist with recruiting landlords to participate in Back@Home through large requests for landlord participation and individual calls to landlords in the disaster declared counties.

As units are identified through Socialserve and determined that they meet unit requirements, they will be entered into the Socialserve Back@Home Unit Database that is accessible to all Rehousing Agencies and closed to the general public. Rehousing Agency staff will be provided a log in for the Socialserve database. If Rehousing Agencies need support in obtaining a login for their staff or technical assistance accessing the database, they can email dit@socialserve.com.

Rehousing Agency staff can use the Socialserve Back@Home Unit Database to locate units for households and reserve units while applications are submitted. Once households identify a unit they want:
1. Rehousing Agency staff can reserve that unit by emailing the unit address and request to reserve to dit@socialserve.com.
2. If the household rents the unit, the Rehousing Agency staff will email dit@socialserve.com to remove the listing.
3. If the household does not rent the unit, Rehousing Agency staff will email dit@socialserve.com to release the reservation on the unit.

High Need Housing Navigation

If a Rehousing Agency submits three housing applications for a household that are denied, and the household has housing barriers that are not able to be addressed with available resources, the Rehousing Agency may refer the household to the high need housing navigation process.

Referrals for high need navigation services should be sent to Jessa.Johnson@dhhs.nc.gov who will coordinate further housing navigation efforts and inform the Rehousing Agency once the household is in a unit. Rehousing Agencies will then coordinate ongoing housing case management for the household if needed.

Housing Case Management Services

The goal of the Back@Home program is to provide housing stability for eligible households impacted by the recent disaster. To that end, Rehousing Agencies will provide up to 6 months of financial assistance and case management services.

Households are not required to participate in case management services to receive Back@Home financial assistance. Case managers should maintain contact with each household on a monthly basis while households are receiving financial assistance.

Further guidance on case management services will be provided at a later date.

Ending Back@Home Assistance

Further information about ending Back@Home assistance will provided soon.

Data Collection

Back@Home Client Files

Rehousing Agencies will primarily use HMIS to capture the services they provide, agencies will also need to keep client records. More details about HMIS data entry for Back@Home will be provided soon.

For each household served, the Rehousing Agency needs to retain:
- Initial Back@Home Assessment
- Copy of Photo ID for individuals over 18 yo
- SSN/Citizenship documentation for individuals over 18 yo
- Unit HQS Inspection report (if not done by HFA)
- Copy of lease
- Unit FMR/Rent Reasonableness documentation (if not done by HFA)
- Landlord Debarment check documentation (if not done by HFA)
- FEMA numbers for household members

All client files need to be protected according to the Rehousing Agency's protocols for storing private information. Rehousing Agencies need to retain client files until NC DHHS notifies them that they are no longer needed.

HMIS Data Entry

Further information about HMIS protocols for Back@Home will be coming soon.

Appendix

Rehousing Agency Initial Documentation Collection

- Assessment packets for all household members that includes:
  - Release of Information/HMIS Release
  - Homeless Verification Letter
  - Back@Home Assessment
- For anyone over 18 years old, a copy of a driver's license or photo ID
- Social Security Cards or at a minimum, a letter/receipt from the Social Security Office for ordering a new card with the social security number on the receipt

Lease Signing Documentation Collection

- Receipts for application fees and deposits (if not outlined in the lease)
- Copy of the lease

FY 2019 Fair Market Rents

County	Efficiency	1-bedroom	2-bedroom	3-bedroom	4-bedroom
Beaufort	$566	$570	$679	$918	$921
Bladen	$510	$513	$679	$914	$918
Brunswick	$702	$736	$852	$1,130	$1,304
Carteret	$664	$668	$869	$1,156	$1,526
Columbus	$522	$539	$679	$897	$1,017
Craven	$675	$676	$894	$1,236	$1,503
Cumberland	$745	$749	$893	$1,246	$1,529
Duplin	$536	$539	$679	$900	$1,159
Greene	$510	$513	$679	$851	$918
Harnett	$591	$595	$787	$1,076	$1,382
Hoke	$624	$628	$742	$1,073	$1,303
Hyde	$732	$736	$908	$1,138	$1,445
Johnston	$846	$949	$1,086	$1,396	$1,764

Jones	$510	$513	$679	$919	$971
Lee	$627	$644	$737	$968	$996
Lenoir	$488	$541	$703	$960	$1,218
Moore	$662	$679	$777	$1,033	$1,365
New Hanover	$715	$790	$1,003	$1,404	$1,704
Onslow	$663	$667	$843	$1,219	$1,481
Pamlico	$564	$584	$725	$958	$1,273
Pender	$607	$694	$794	$1,075	$1,395
Pitt	$607	$611	$774	$1,097	$1,281
Richmond	$572	$576	$679	$886	$1,008
Robeson	$512	$515	$679	$851	$965
Sampson	$519	$522	$679	$944	$1,036
Scotland	$523	$526	$696	$872	$1,125
Wayne	$565	$569	$753	$964	$1,257
Wilson	$621	$638	$730	$983	$987