



# WELCOME

October 30, 2024

Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority Board Meeting

EXPLORE  
ASHEVILLE

POWERED BY

Buncombe County Tourism  
Development Authority

# CALL TO ORDER

Chair Brenda Durden

- Call to order the Joint Meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA Nonprofit Corporation



## Board Meeting

Wednesday, October 30, 2024 | 9:00 a.m.

Explore Asheville | 27 College Place | Board Room (1st Floor)

Members of the public may attend in person or [register here](#) to view a livestream of the meeting.

### AGENDA

9:00 a.m.	Call to Order the Joint Meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation	Brenda Durden
9:05 a.m.	Approval of September 25, 2024, Meeting Minutes	Brenda Durden
9:10 a.m.	Financial Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. September 2024 Financial Reports</li><li>b. Occupancy Tax Penalty Waivers Related to Hurricane Helene Recovery</li><li>c. Reforecasting</li></ul>	Melissa Moore, Buncombe County Finance Director / BCTDA Fiscal Agent Melissa Moore Jennifer Kass-Green
9:25 a.m.	President & CEO Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Industry Metrics</li><li>b. Other Updates</li></ul>	Vic Isley
9:35 a.m.	Strategic Imperatives: Progress Report <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. First Quarter Review (July 2024 – September 2024 Highlights)</li></ul>	Vic Isley and Explore Asheville staff
9:45 a.m.	Hurricane Helene Response and Recovery Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Partner Support and Love Asheville from Afar</li><li>b. Always Asheville Fund</li><li>c. Concert for Carolina</li><li>d. Reopening and Recovery Messaging</li><li>e. Business Continuity Efforts and Recovery Resources</li></ul>	Vic Isley and Explore Asheville staff
10:10 a.m.	Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) and Legacy Investment from Tourism (LIFT) Fund Updates	Tiffany Thacker
10:20 a.m.	Asheville City Council Update	Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore
10:25 a.m.	Buncombe County Commission Update	Commissioner Terri Wells
10:30 a.m.	Miscellaneous Business	Brenda Durden
10:35 a.m.	Comments from the General Public	Brenda Durden
10:40 a.m.	Adjournment	Brenda Durden

The next joint BCTDA monthly meeting is **Thursday, November 21, 2024**, at 9:00 a.m., in the Board Room of Explore Asheville, located at 27 College Place. Please contact Julia Simpson at [jsimpson@ExploreAsheville.com](mailto:jsimpson@ExploreAsheville.com) or 828.333.5831 with questions.

#### BCTDA Mission Statement

*To be a leader in the economic development of Buncombe County by attracting and servicing visitors, generating income, jobs and tax revenues which make the community a better place to live and visit.*





# MOMENT OF REFLECTION

EXPLORE  
**ASHEVILLE**  
POWERED BY Buncombe County Tourism  
Development Authority

# FOR OUR REMOTE VIEWERS

Chair Brenda Durden

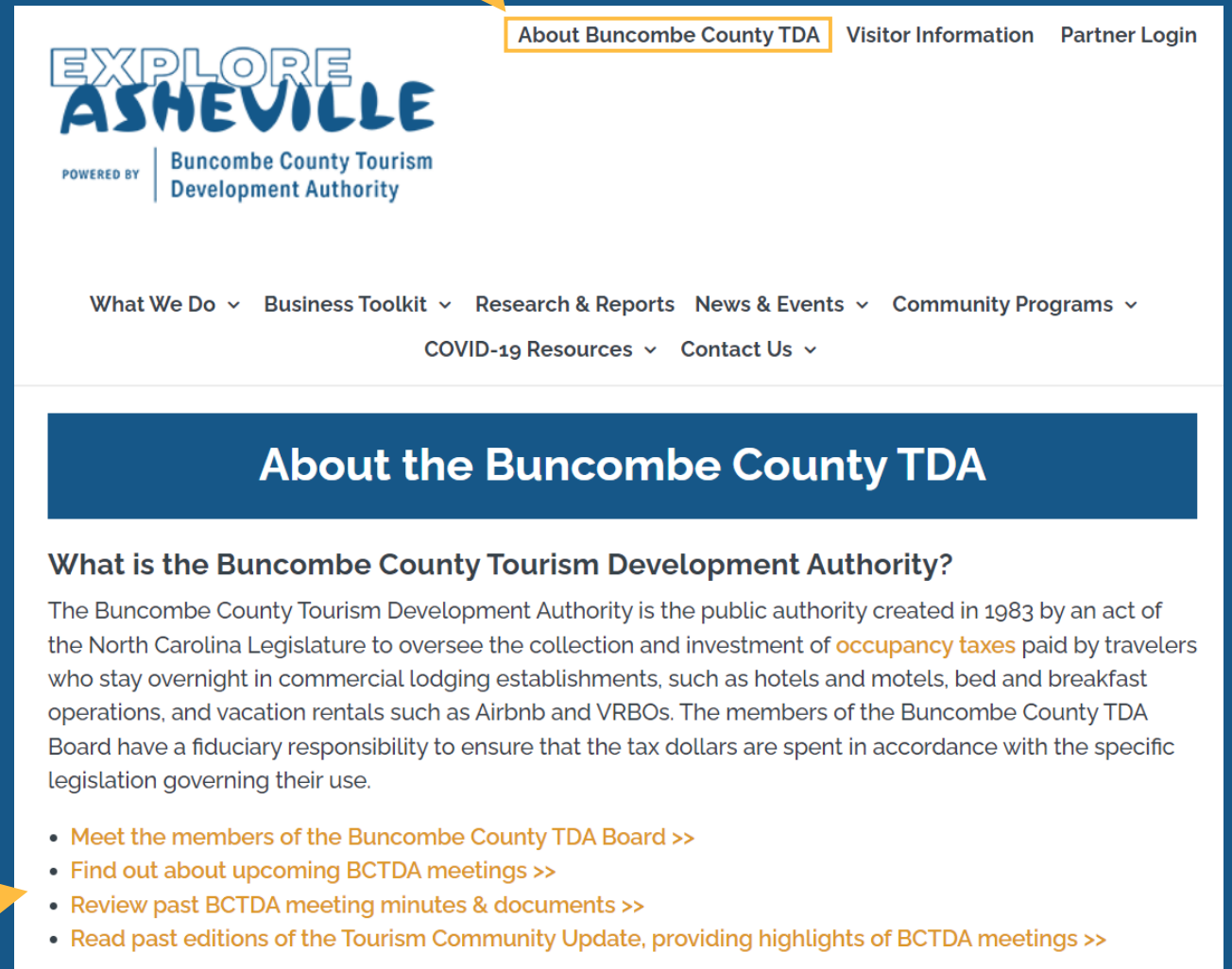
For our viewers watching remotely, documents were emailed to everyone who registered on Zoom by 8:00 this morning.

The agenda and meeting documents are also available online.

Additional materials, including the PowerPoint presentation, will be posted later today.

Go to:

- [AshevilleCVB.com](https://www.ashevillecvb.com)
- About the Buncombe County TDA
- Find out about upcoming BCTDA meetings



**EXPLORE ASHEVILLE**  
POWERED BY | Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

[About Buncombe County TDA](#) [Visitor Information](#) [Partner Login](#)

[What We Do](#) [Business Toolkit](#) [Research & Reports](#) [News & Events](#) [Community Programs](#)  
[COVID-19 Resources](#) [Contact Us](#)

## About the Buncombe County TDA

### What is the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority?

The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority is the public authority created in 1983 by an act of the North Carolina Legislature to oversee the collection and investment of **occupancy taxes** paid by travelers who stay overnight in commercial lodging establishments, such as hotels and motels, bed and breakfast operations, and vacation rentals such as Airbnb and VRBOs. The members of the Buncombe County TDA Board have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the tax dollars are spent in accordance with the specific legislation governing their use.

- [Meet the members of the Buncombe County TDA Board >>](#)
- [Find out about upcoming BCTDA meetings >>](#)
- [Review past BCTDA meeting minutes & documents >>](#)
- [Read past editions of the Tourism Community Update, providing highlights of BCTDA meetings >>](#)

# WELCOME BOARD & GUESTS

Chair Brenda Durden

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- Welcome board members and guests who are in attendance
- Introductions around the room



# SEPTEMBER 25 MINUTES

Chair Brenda Durden

## Questions/ Comments

## Suggested Motion:

Motion to approve the September 25, 2024, meeting minutes.

## Motion Second

## Additional Discussion

## Vote



POWERED BY | Buncombe County Tourism  
Development Authority

Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority  
A Joint Meeting of the Public Authority and Nonprofit Corporation  
Explore Asheville – 27 College Place, Asheville

Board Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, September 25, 2024

- Present (Voting):** Brenda Durden, Chair; Matthew Lehman, Vice Chair; HP Patel, Michael Lusick, Lucious Wilson, Elizabeth Putnam, Himanshu Karvir, Larry Crosby
- Absent (Voting):** Tim Rosebrock
- Present (Ex-Officio):** None
- Absent (Ex-Officio):** Asheville Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore, Buncombe County Commissioner Terri Wells
- Staff:** Vic Isley, Mike Kryzaneck, Jennifer Kass-Green, Dodie Stephens, Julia Simpson, Ashley Greenstein, Josh Jones, Mia Brown, Tina Porter, Connie Holliday
- BC Finance:** Melissa Moore
- Legal Counsel:** Sabrina Rockoff, McGuire, Wood & Bissette
- In-Person Attendees:** Julie Kirkpatrick, Mary Watkins, Josh Quinn, David DelBello, Sandy Ritter, Sarah Cameron, Guy van Rooyen; MeetNKY  
John Ellis, Prior BCTDA Board Member  
Dave Nutter, Retired Planner
- Online Attendees:** Emily Crosby, McKenzie Provost, Khal Khoury; Explore Asheville  
Chris Smith, Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission  
Jim Muth, Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) Committee  
Meghan Rogers, Asheville Independent Restaurants Association  
Chip Craig, Greybeard Realty  
Diane Rogers, Pinecrest Bed & Breakfast  
Summer Casiano, Tanger Asheville  
Rick Bell, Asheville Buncombe Hotel Association  
Kit Cramer, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce  
Jaime Matthews, City of Asheville  
Brad Durden, Asheville Hotel Group





# FINANCIAL UPDATES

Melissa Moore  
Buncombe County | Director of Finance  
BCTDA | Fiscal Agent

EXPLORE  
ASHEVILLE

POWERED BY | Buncombe County Tourism  
Development Authority



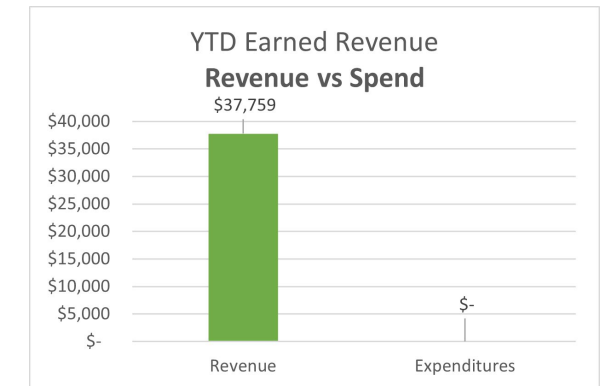
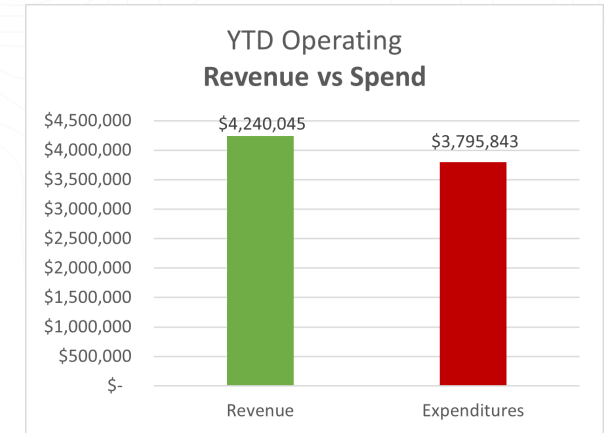
# SEPTEMBER 2024 FINANCIAL REPORTS

**Melissa Moore**  
Buncombe County | Director of Finance  
BCTDA | Fiscal Agent



# OPERATING AND EARNED REVENUE FUNDS

Revenues (Current and Prior-year) vs Expenditures (current year), September 2024



For more information, see financial and sales statements pages 1-3, and 7



# OPERATING AND EARNED REVENUE FUNDS

Monthly Summary of Activities, September 2024

Operating Fund	Budget	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	(%) Budget Collected/Used
Total revenues	\$27,347,000	\$2,033,712	\$4,240,045	18.5%
Total expenditures		\$1,421,329	\$3,795,843	13.9%

Earned Revenue Fund	Budget	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	(%) Budget Collected/Used
Total revenues	\$350,000	\$0	\$37,759	18.2%
Total expenditures		\$0	\$0	0.0%

For more information, see financial and sales statements pages 1-2



# PROJECT FUNDS: TPDF AND LIFT FUND

Monthly Summary of Activities, September 2024

Tourism Product Development Fund	Budget	Current Month Actual	Life to Date Actual	(%) Budget Collected/Used
<b>Total revenues</b>	\$32,554,985	\$691,196	\$43,323,622	>100%
<b>Total expenditures</b>		\$1,394	\$5,968,996	18%
Active projects		19		
Funding available for future grants		\$10,768,638		

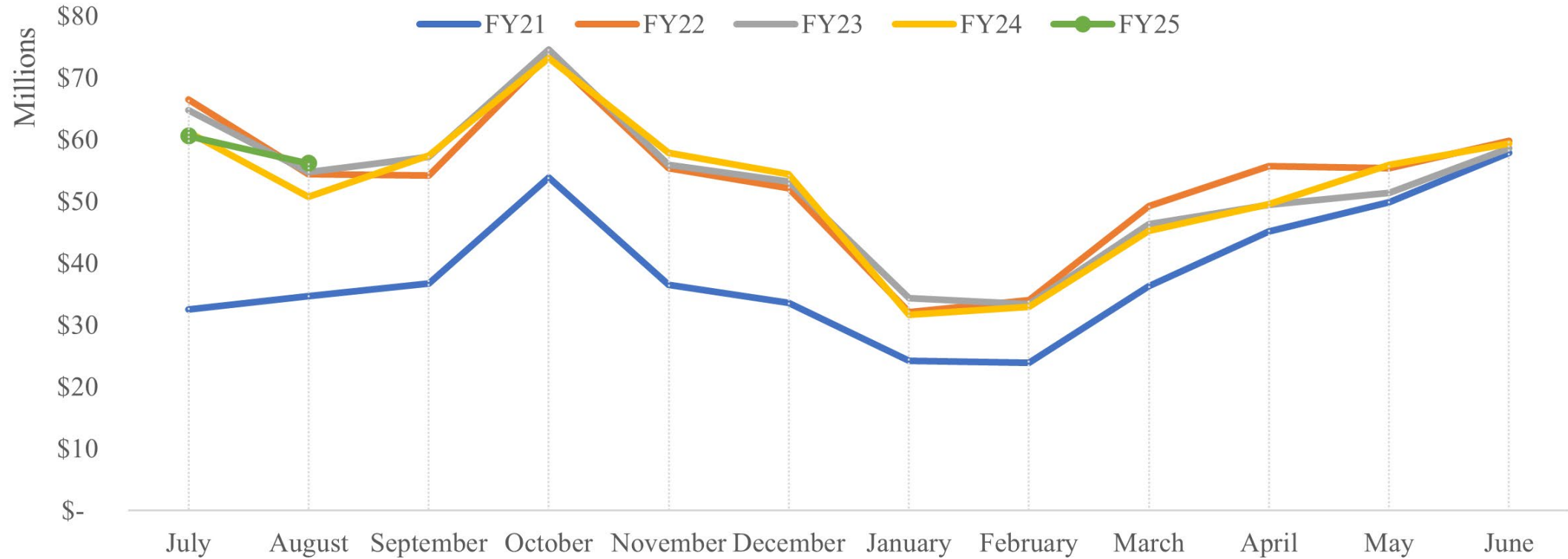
Legacy Investment From Tourism Fund	Budget	Current Month Actual	Life to Date Actual	(%) Budget Collected/Used
<b>Total revenues</b>	\$10,390,903	\$572,336	\$13,434,083	>100%
<b>Total expenditures</b>		\$0	\$21,960	0%
Active projects		12		
Funding available for future grants		\$3,043,181		

For more information, see financial and sales statements pages 3, 5, & 6



# LODGING SALES

Shown by Month of Sales, Year-to-Date (5 years), September 2024

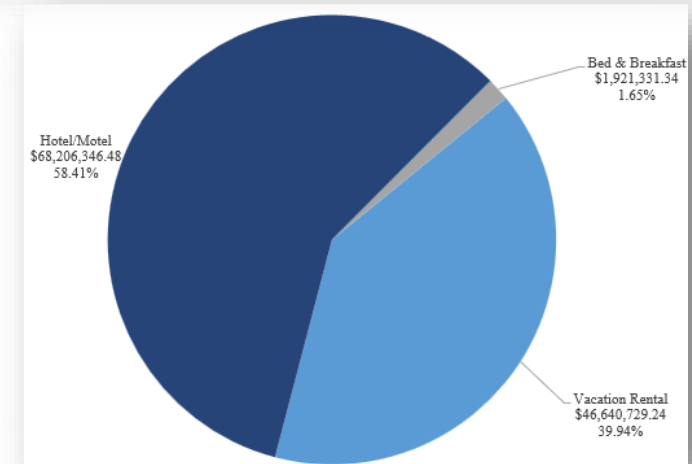
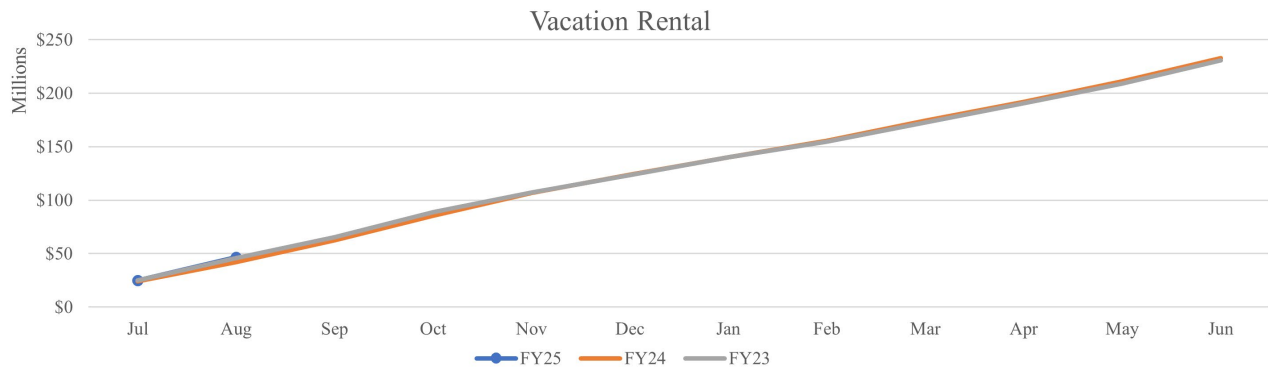
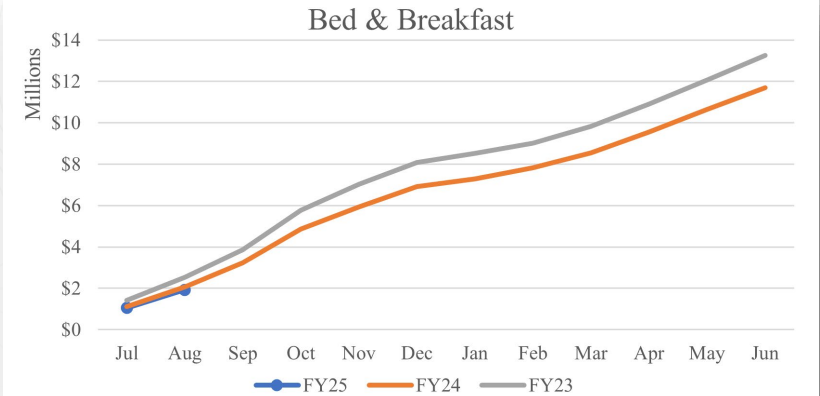
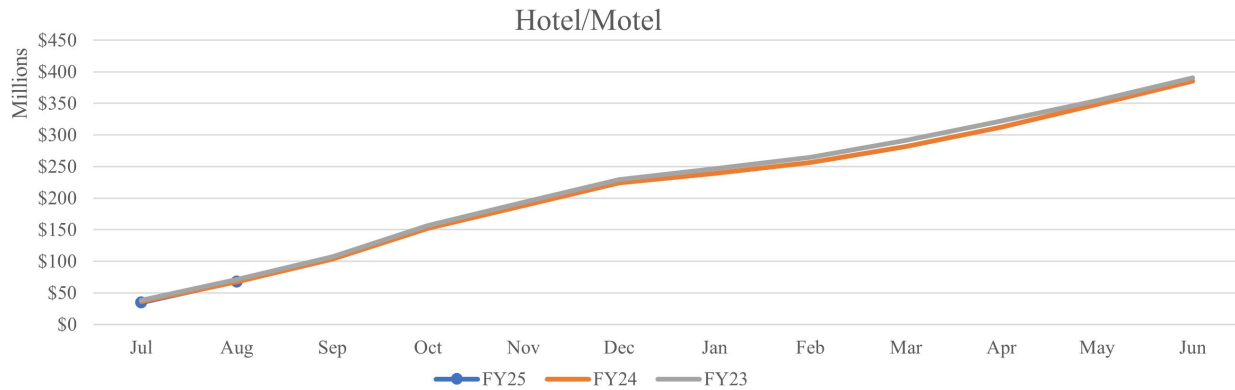


For more information, see financial and sales statements page 9



# LODGING SALES

Activity by type and month, shown for 3 years, September 2024



For more information, see financial and sales statements pages 9 - 10

# SEPTEMBER 2024 FINANCIAL REPORTS

Chair Brenda Durden

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## Questions/Comments

### Suggested Motion:

Motion to approve the September 2024 financial reports as presented.

## Motion Second

## Additional Discussion

## Vote





# OCCUPANCY TAX PENALTY WAIVERS RELATED TO HURRICANE HELENE RECOVERY

**Melissa Moore**

**Buncombe County | Director of Finance  
BCTDA | Fiscal Agent**

# PROACTIVE PENALTY WAIVER REQUEST

Pardon fees associated with late reporting and payments of occupancy tax during Helene recovery

- Penalty waiver requests have been recommended previously due to unforeseen circumstances, including the first months of the pandemic.
- Many POS systems were down with widespread power outages for days following Helene.
- Received requests to waive Helene-related occupancy tax penalties for September, October, November, and December 2024.

*NOTE: This does not waive payments of occupancy taxes; only additional fees that would result from late filing or payments through the end of the calendar year. Occupancy tax reporting and payments must be received by June 2025.*





# PENALTY WAIVER RECOMMENDATION

Chair Brenda Durden

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## Questions/Comments

### Suggested Motion:

Motion to waive Helene-related occupancy tax penalties for September, October, November and December lodging until June 2025.

## Motion Second

## Additional Discussion

## Vote





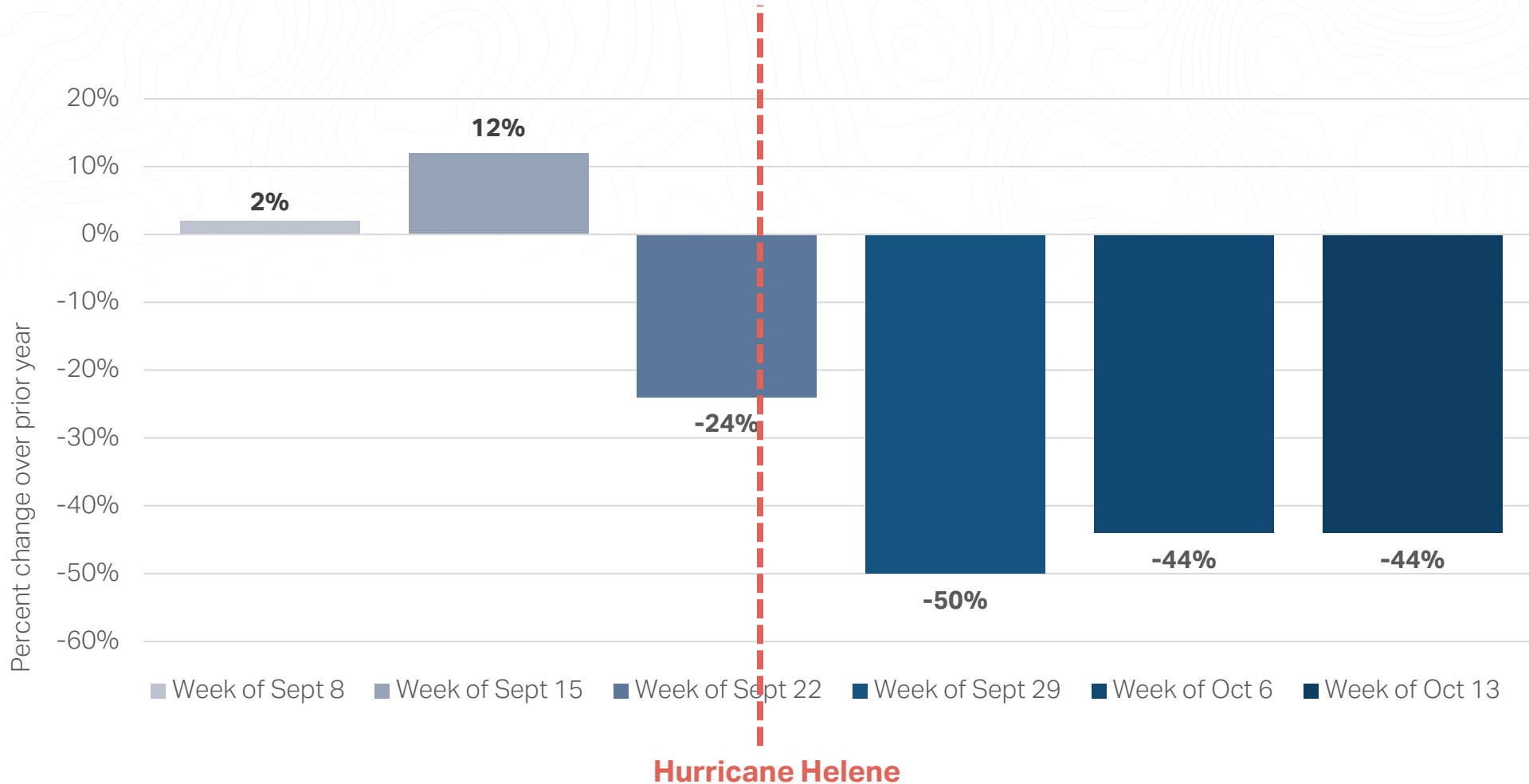
# REFORECASTING FY25 REVENUE PROJECTIONS

**Jennifer Kass-Green**

**Explore Asheville | VP of Culture & Business Affairs**

# BUNCOMBE COUNTY WEEKLY HOTEL REVENUE PERCENT CHANGE

Severe impact of Hurricane Helene immediately evident



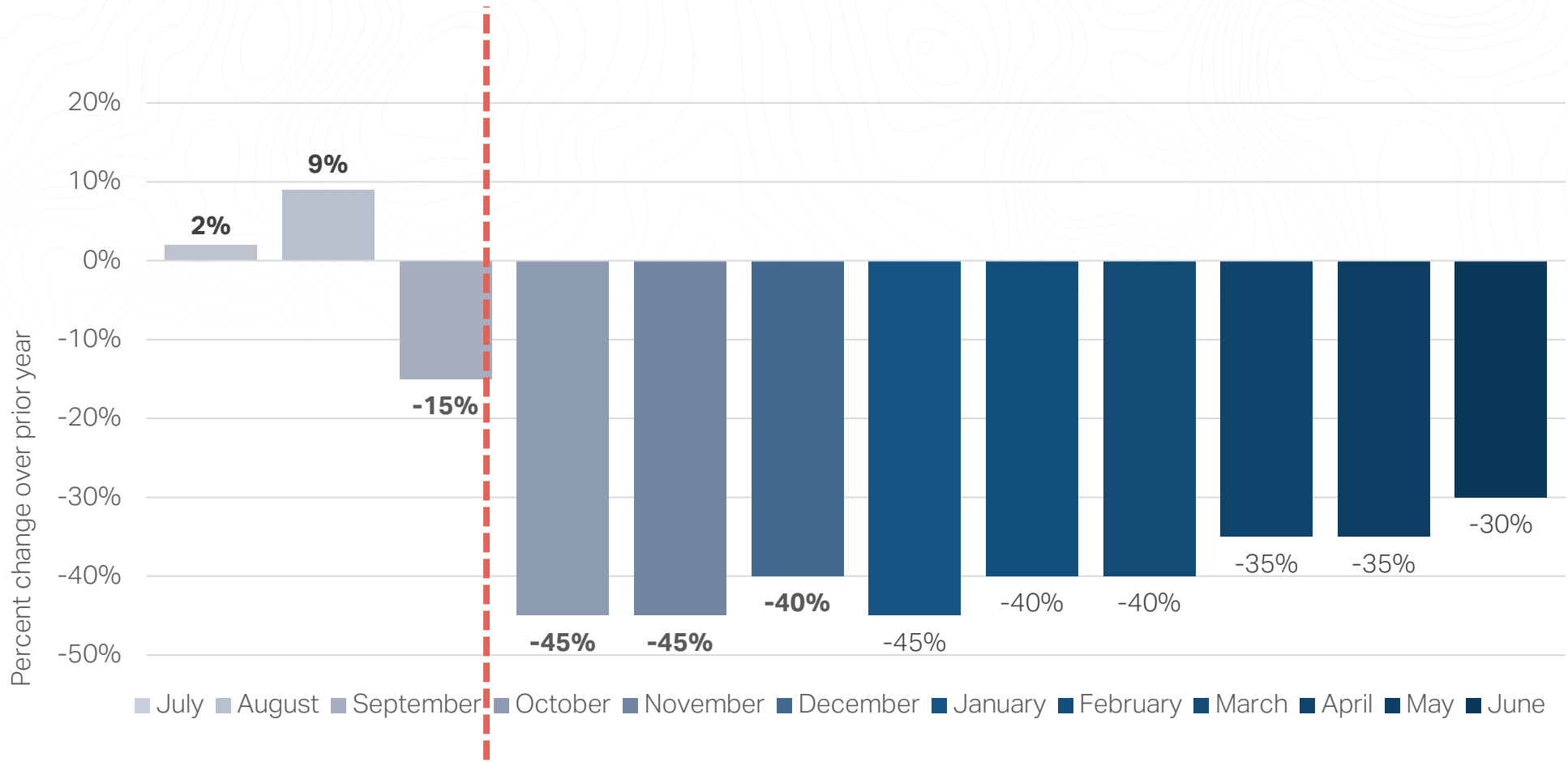
- Lodging and sales tax collections were already experiencing periods of weakness in 2024, following the 5% decline in 2023. Merchants and business owners were reporting weaker performance and were counting on a robust fall season.
- Helene hit western North Carolina on September 27 and 28.
- The impact of the storm appears the week of September 22, with the full impact evident the week of September 29.

Source: BCTDA; Tourism Economics



# BUNCOMBE COUNTY LODGING TAX

Forecasts for FY25



**Hurricane Helene**

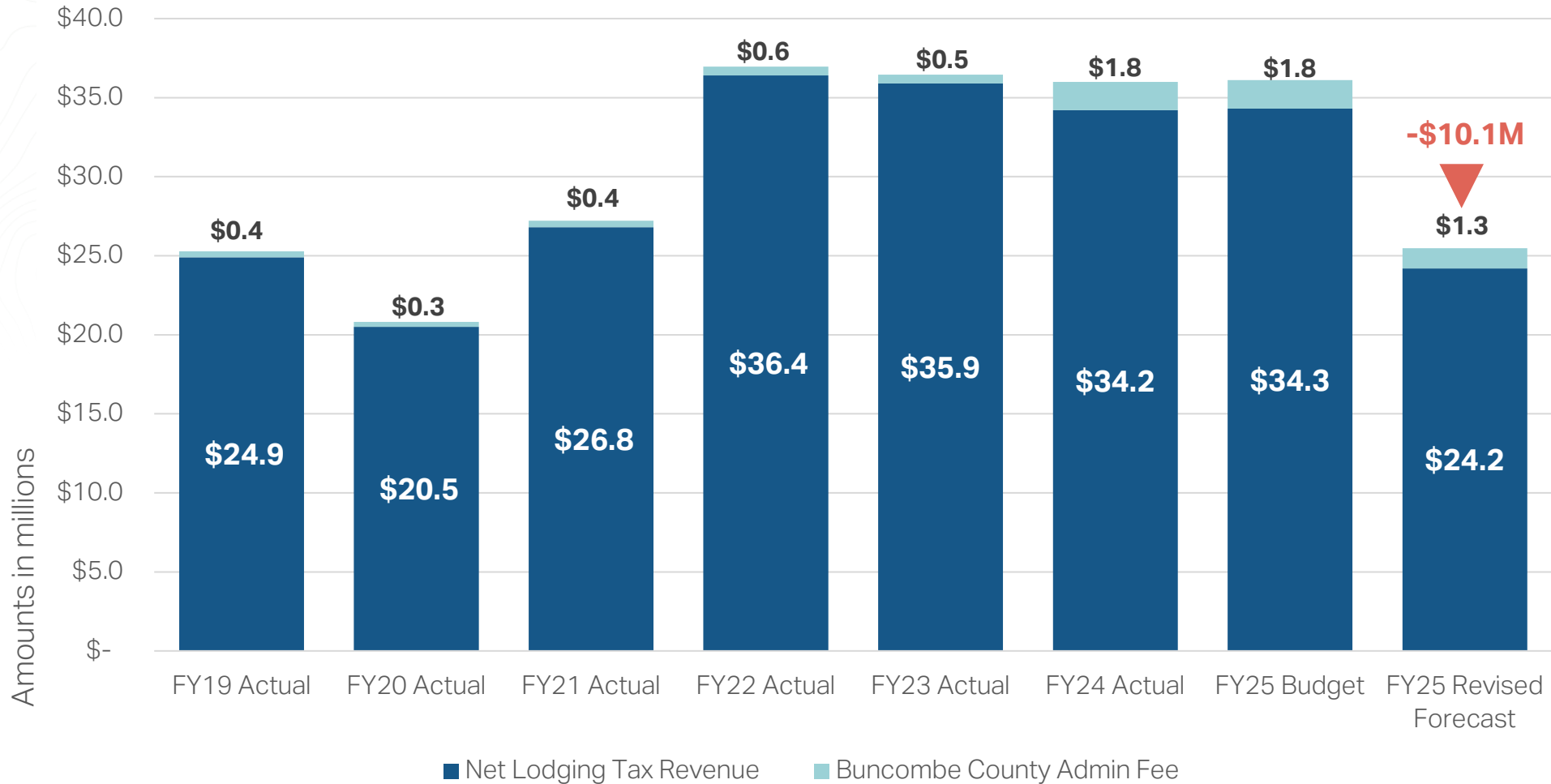
- The pace of recovery will depend on the timing of repairs to infrastructure including power and water systems, highways, and natural assets including the Blue Ridge Parkway.
- Additionally, there is a marketing and communication need to convey to potential guests that Asheville is open, accessible, and still an appealing place to visit.
- Quick action on these factors could accelerate economic recovery, including lodging tax revenue.

Source: BCTDA; Tourism Economics



# BUNCOMBE COUNTY LODGING TAX REVISED FORECAST

Based on lodging tax revenue history in Buncombe County, FY19-FY25



- Revised forecast is approximately \$10.1M less than original FY25 net revenue budget.
- Lodging tax collections are forecast to decline 29% for FY25, to the lowest level since the pandemic in FY20.
- Year-over-year monthly declines of 40%-45% in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Helene are expected to gradually lessen over the course of the fiscal year.

Source: BCTDA; Tourism Economics



# FY25 NET LODGING TAX REVENUE, BY FUND

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Fund	FY25 Net Revenue Budget	FY25 Net Revenue Forecast
Operating Fund	\$23.0M	\$16.2M
Tourism Product Development Fund	\$5.7M	\$4.0M
Legacy Investment From Tourism Fund	\$5.7M	\$4.0M
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$34.3M</b>	<b>\$24.2M</b>



# FY25 OPERATING BUDGET & FORECAST - OCTOBER 2024

Operating budget is 66.67% of total lodging tax revenue

Revenue	FY25 Net Revenue Budget	FY25 Net Revenue Forecast
Net Lodging Tax Revenue	\$23.0M	\$16.2M
Fund Balance Designation	\$4.3M	\$9.2M
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$27.3M</b>	<b>\$25.4M</b>
Expense	FY25 Budget	FY25 Forecast
Salaries & Benefits	\$4.4M	\$4.2M
Administration & Facilities	\$1.1M	\$1.0M
Marketing	\$19.4M	\$18.0M
Business Development	\$1.7M	\$1.5M
Partnership & Destination Mgmt	\$0.7M	\$0.7M
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$27.3M</b>	<b>\$25.4M</b>



# FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICY

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## Designated contingency

- Designated contingency should equal 6 months of annual operating costs (50% expense budget), in alignment with best practices for emergency, crisis management and recovery.
- Use of designated contingency must be approved by the BCTDA board. Requests should include an analysis, determine the use of funds and plans for replenishment.
- The organization's goal is to replenish the funds used within twelve months to restore the designated contingency to the target minimum amount. If the use of contingency will take longer than 12 months to replenish, the request should have an additional layer of scrutiny prior to approval.



# FY25 OPERATING FUND BALANCE FORECAST – OCTOBER 2024

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	FY25 Beginning Fund Balance	FY25 Forecast Change in Fund Balance	FY25 Year- End Forecast Fund Balance
Designated Contingency* (50% Expense Budget)	13,673,500	-	13,673,500
Undesignated (Cash Flow)	9,466,320	(9,232,659)	233,661
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,139,820</b>	<b>(9,232,659)</b>	<b>13,907,161</b>



# TPDF / LIFT FUND – UPDATED OCTOBER 2024

One-third of net lodging tax is split evenly between Tourism Product Development Fund and Legacy Investment From Tourism Fund

## TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT FUND

FY25 Beginning Fund Balance	\$9.6M
FY25 Revenue Forecast	\$4.0M
FY25 Administrative Budget	\$0.5M
FY25 TPDF Ending Fund Balance	\$13.1M

Included in the TPDF administrative budget are expenses associated with TPDF project signage, committee support, professional services and TPDF legal fees.

## LEGACY INVESTMENT FROM TOURISM FUND

FY25 Beginning Fund Balance	\$2.1M
FY25 Revenue Forecast	\$4.0M
FY25 Administrative Budget	\$0.4M
FY25 LIFT Ending Fund Balance	\$5.7M

Included in the LIFT Fund administrative budget are expenses associated with wayfinding maintenance and updates, committee support, professional services and LIFT legal fees.

# BOARD DISCUSSION

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QUESTIONS

INPUT

COMMENTS





# PRESIDENT & CEO REPORT

**Vic Isley**  
Explore Asheville | President & CEO

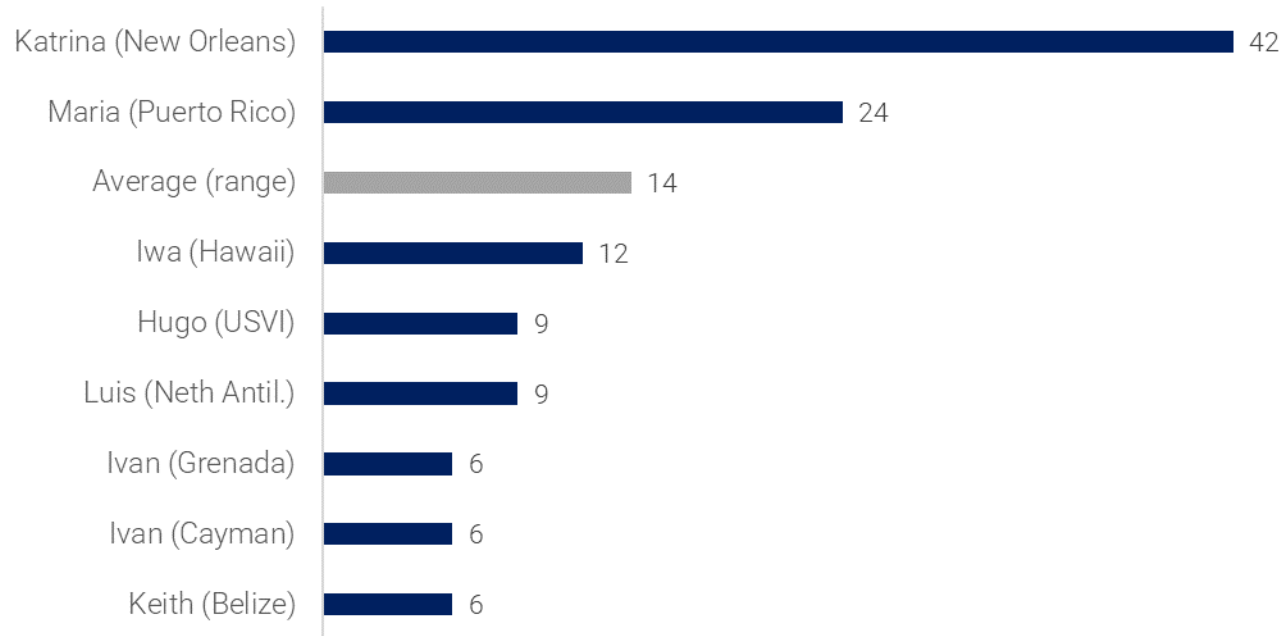
**EXPLORE  
ASHEVILLE**  
POWERED BY  
Buncombe County Tourism  
Development Authority

# VISITOR SPENDING RECOVERY

According to Tourism Economics, most destinations recovered within a year

## Duration of Hurricane Tourism Impacts

Visitor spending return to baseline (months)

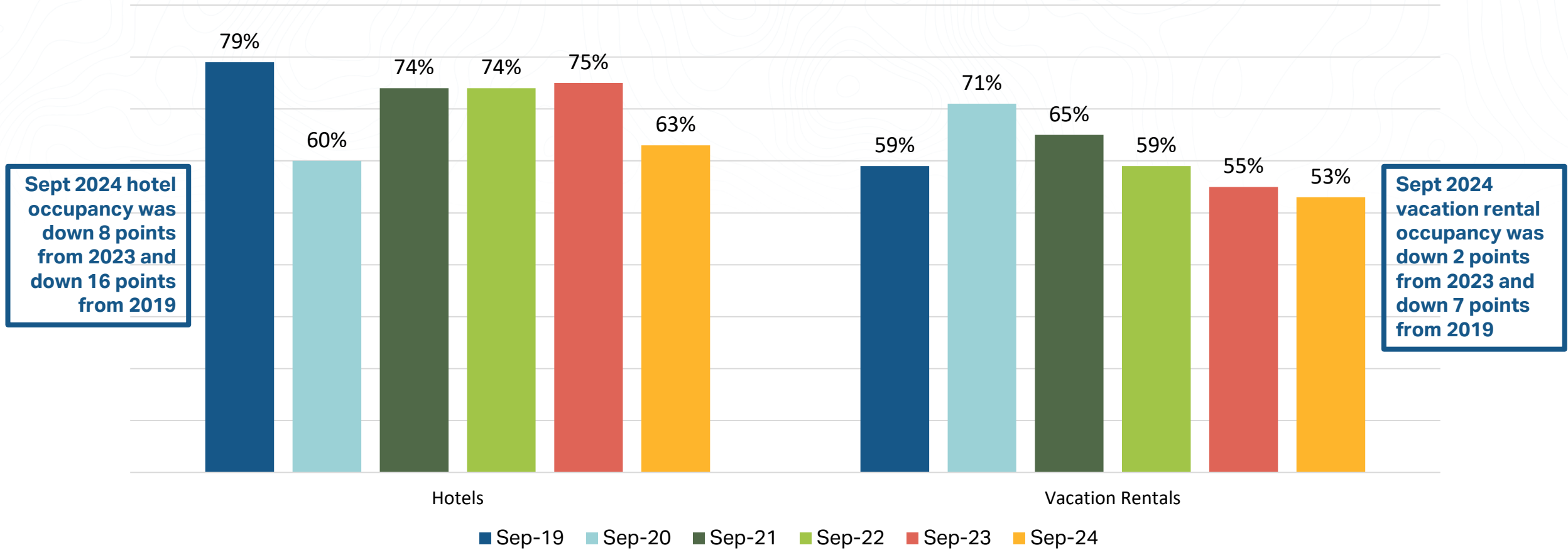


Source: Tourism Economics

- Most destinations facing hurricane recovery saw visitor spending return to the pre-hurricane baseline within 12 months.
- Hurricanes Katrina and Maria are outliers at 42 and 24 months, respectively.
- The recovery in Fort Myers, FL from Hurricane Ian in September 2022 is still on-going. Differentiating the impact in Fort Myers from Asheville is the extent of hotel damage.
- A year after the storm, Fort Myers hotel inventory was 1,185 rooms fewer than when the storm made landfall. The room count was still down by nearly 600 rooms two years after the storm.
- Our region's mountain terrain and water system failure make our recovery timeline an outlier.

# SEPTEMBER LODGING OCCUPANCY

Preliminary

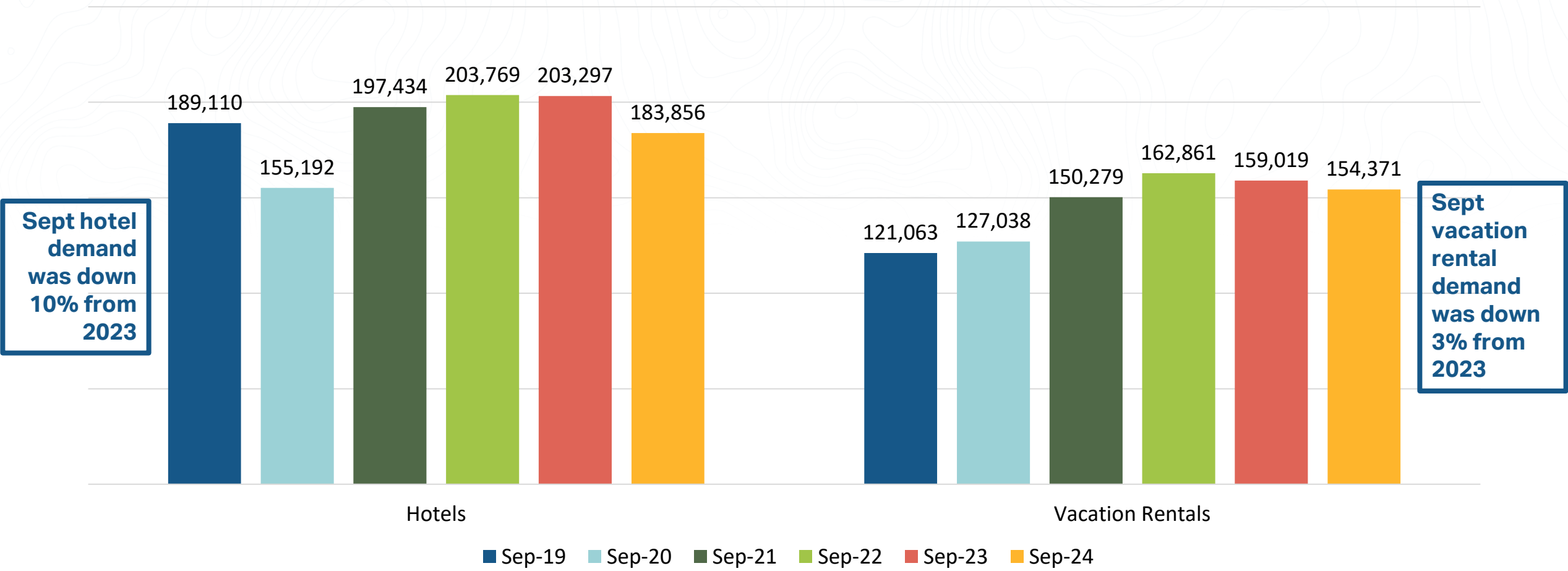


Sources: Smith Travel Research & AirDNA



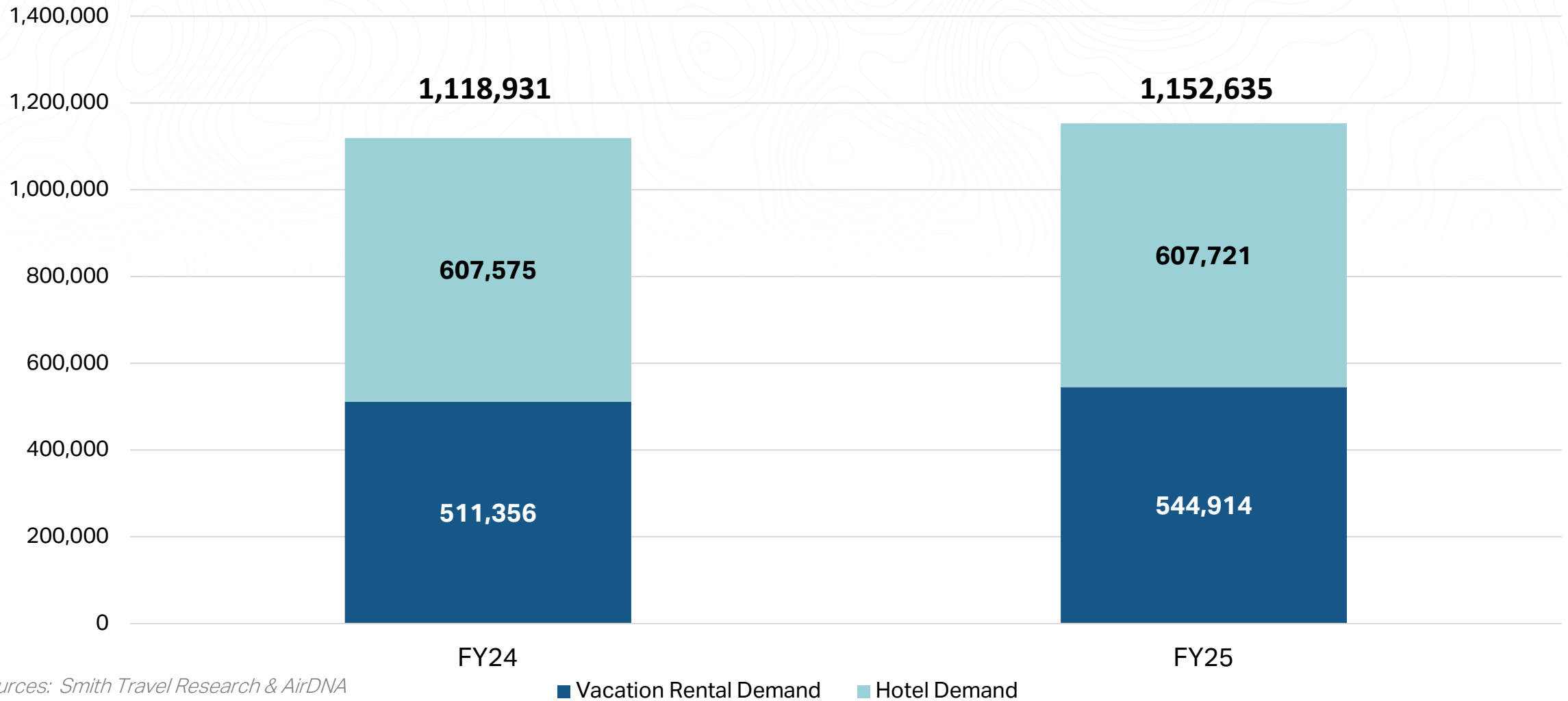
# SEPTEMBER DEMAND

Preliminary



# TOTAL ROOMNIGHT DEMAND

3% change FYTD (July – September 2024)



Sources: Smith Travel Research & AirDNA

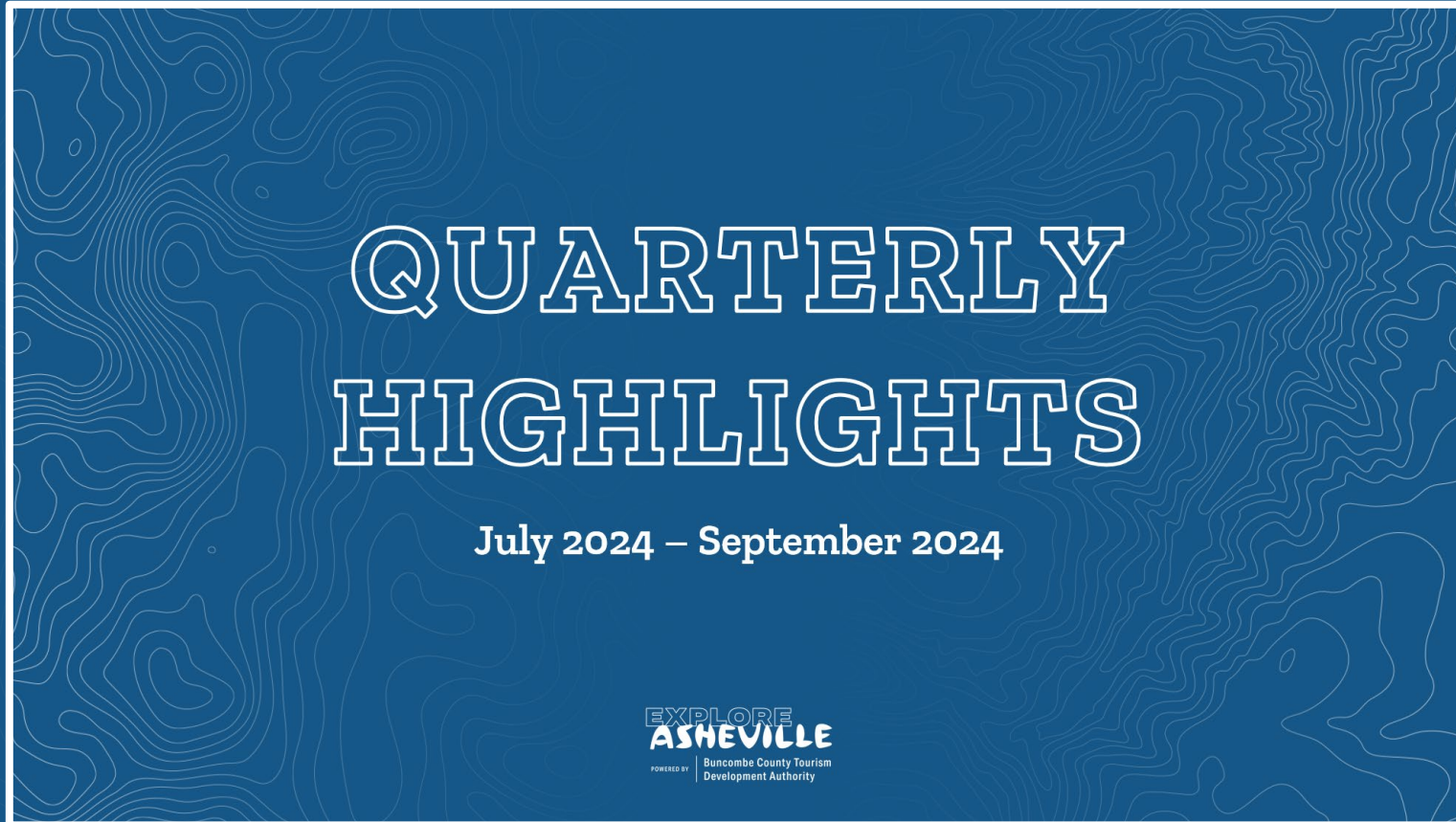




# QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

Captures progress toward our strategic imperatives from July – September 2024

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Full Q1 report available at [AshevilleCVB.com/quarterly-highlights](https://AshevilleCVB.com/quarterly-highlights)





# HELENE RESPONSE & RECOVERY UPDATES

Explore Asheville Staff

# HURRICANE HELENE RESPONSE TIMELINE

**Wed, 9/25/24**  
Buncombe County declared local state of emergency

**Sat, 9/28/24**  
Travel Advisory Issued

**Tues, 10/1/24**  
FEMA, business, artist, and immediate resources sent to Partners

**Mon, 10/7/24**  
Always Asheville Fund & Concert for Carolina Sponsorship announced

**Thurs, 10/10/24**  
Call for Love Asheville From Afar participants; launched Always Asheville Fund donation form

**Thurs, 10/17/24**  
Concert for Carolina Ticket Raffle and VIP Concert Package to Benefit the Always Asheville Fund

**Sat, 10/26/24**  
Concert for Carolina & Concert for Carolina Viewing

**Tues, 10/29/24**  
Soft launch of new ExploreAsheville.com with business status updates

**Thurs, 9/26/24**  
Explore Asheville issued Weather Advisory

**Mon, 9/30/24**  
Created clearinghouse for hotel rooms responders, linemen, and emergency workers

**Tues, 10/8/24**  
Explore Asheville reopened the office for partners to recharge, connect to the internet, and pick up supplies donated by Explore Charleston

**Mon, 10/14/24**  
Love Asheville From Afar Website Launched

**Sat, 10/19/24**  
Visit NC Travel Advisory updated from Do Not Travel (Red) to Proceed with Caution (Yellow)

**Mon, 10/28/24**  
US Travel Association Roundtable with Rep. Chuck Edwards

**Wed, 10/30/24**  
Always Asheville Fund application to open with \$750K



# PARTNER SUPPORT & LOVE ASHEVILLE FROM AFAR

EXPLORE  
ASHEVILLE

POWERED BY  
Buncombe County Tourism  
Development Authority

# LOVE ASHEVILLE FROM AFAR

Supporting local, small creators and makers

- Day 15: Launched with 320 participating local merchants.
- Website template offered to regional DMO partners for free.
- As of this week, currently featuring close to **650** merchants, makers and area businesses.

## Shop and Support Area Businesses

126 Asheville Area Businesses to Help ♥

[Sort A-Z](#)

Search

Categories [Clear](#)

- Arts
- Farms & Farmer's Markets
- Food & Drink
- Lodging
- Nonprofit
- Outdoors & Wellness
- Retail
- Services
- Tours & Attractions



**Dog & Pony Show**  

Beautifully curated collection of distinctive home décor and unique gifts

[SHOP](#)



**De La Terre Skincare**  

Natural skincare that goes well beyond simple quality, and purity

[SHOP](#)



**LOFT of Asheville**  

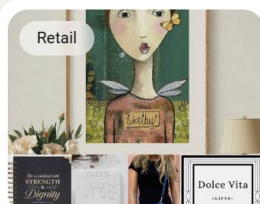
A fun and eclectic gift shop in downtown Asheville

[SHOP](#)

[DONATE](#)



Retail



Retail



Retail



# LOVE ASHEVILLE FROM AFAR

[Shop Now ↓](#)

## Shop · Support · Sustain

In the wake of Hurricane Helene, many beloved Asheville and Buncombe County businesses have been deeply affected by the storm. While the community comes together to rebuild, you can lend a helping hand from afar by shopping at these businesses' online stores or contributing to fundraising efforts.

Local, independent businesses are the heart of Asheville, home to growers who are artists and artists whose work grows. Thought leaders and thought provokers, musicians and storytellers, entrepreneurs and educators, foodies and beer lovers, hippies, healers, adventurers, creators and innovators. We craft and brew and paint and carve, handcrafted by real hands. Real hands that need a helping hand. And a hug.

Your support sustains the deeply-rooted culture that makes the Asheville area so special. Every purchase counts—thank you for standing with us. If you want to do more, consider donating directly to the [Always Asheville Fund](#) and other local, large-scale impact funds and relief organizations.

Want to be featured on this page? If your business has an online store or donation platform, we'd love to include it. [Fill out this form](#) to get involved.

[Shop Now ↓](#)



## Partner Organizations



# LOVE ASHEVILLE FROM AFAR



Miranda May Dobson

This is brilliant!! I have been visiting Asheville more recently over the last decade and I didn't know some of these existed! What an amazing travel planning guide this has turned into for me. I am very much looking forward to returning to a one of my...

See more

1d Love Reply Send message Hide

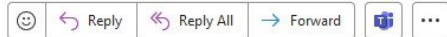


Re: We included you: Love Asheville From Afar



Cailey Goodway <goodesigns8@gmail.com>

To Emilie Soffe



Mon 10/14/2024 12:31 PM

Hi Emilie,

I just made the connection that you took part in setting this up along with placing an order!

I wanted to take a moment to express my gratitude to you and everyone involved in creating this website. The support I've received following the publishing of the page has been truly overwhelming.

Thank you again! And I hope you're loving your cowboy toad! ❤️

Warmly,  
Cailey



In the wake of Hurricane Helene, many beloved Asheville area businesses have been deeply affected.

Independent makers and local businesses are the heart of this creative Blue Ridge Mountain community, home to growers who are artists and artists whose work grows.

Lend a helping hand. Shop their online stores and donate to recovery funds.

Your support means the world. We are everyone for every single one.

Always,  
ASHEVILLE



SCAN TO  
EXPLORE





# ALWAYS ASHEVILLE FUND

EXPLORE  
**ASHEVILLE**  
POWERED BY | Buncombe County Tourism  
Development Authority

# ALWAYS ASHEVILLE FUND

## Emergency grants for small, independent businesses

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- Explore Asheville, our 501(c)(6) nonprofit established the Always Asheville Fund to help our County's small independent travel and hospitality businesses reopen from the devastating impacts and aftermath of Hurricane Helene.
- To seed the fund, we transferred \$300,000 from our earned revenue fund with approval from the BCTDA Chair on Oct. 7.
- Assisting our small businesses with emergency grants, not loans, will aid in part to sustain this deeply rooted, creative community that we all love.
- This support is crucial: according to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), 40% of small businesses do not reopen after a disaster.
- We aim to buck that trend in small part by opening an abbreviated grants application process tomorrow with \$752,500 in available funds; grants to be distributed starting November 25.
- 90% of nearly 400 small travel and hospitality businesses that received Tourism Jobs Recovery Fund grants to reopen following the pandemic were still in operation four years later.

ALWAYS  
ASHEVILLE  
FUND



# ALWAYS ASHEVILLE FUND

Emergency grants for small, independent businesses

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- **Purpose:** Support the quick re-opening of as many businesses as we can
- **Total Amount Available:** \$752,500 at this time
- **Grant Amount:** \$5,000 - \$10,000 microgrants to support small local businesses in their re-opening
- **Number of Expected Awards:** 75 – 150
- **Use of Funds:** Operational expenses, re-opening expenses

ALWAYS  
ASHEVILLE  
FUND



# ALWAYS ASHEVILLE FUND

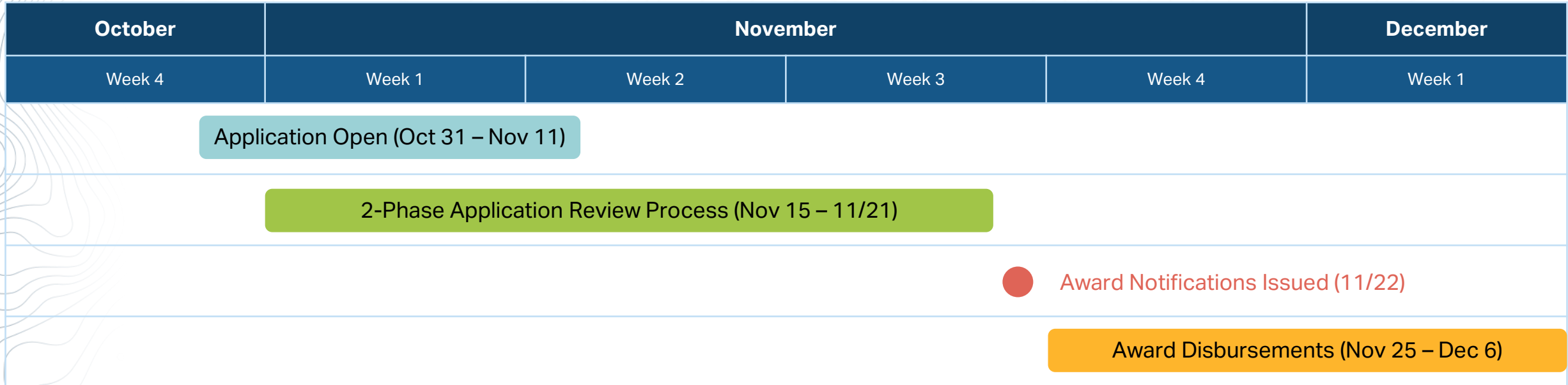
## Eligibility Criteria

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<b>Small, Independent Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Business must be a small, independent business that had at least 2 employees and not more than 100 employees as of September 26, 2024. (Owners who are actively working in the business do count as employees; passive owners and independent contractors do not.)</li><li>• Must have been in business prior to July 1, 2024.</li></ul>
<b>Tourism-Related Business</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Business must provide a direct in-person visitor experience. A business engaged in providing lodging, in whole or in part, is not eligible.</li></ul>
<b>Based in Buncombe County</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Business must be physically located within Buncombe County</li></ul>
<b>Tropical Storm Helene Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Must be able to demonstrate business was impacted by Tropical Storm Helene including but not limited to business interruption, physical damage, and/or loss of equipment or inventory.</li></ul>
<b>Ability to Re-Open</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Must be able to provide a clear plan to re-open quickly, along with a detailed description for the use of grant funds.</li></ul>

# ALWAYS ASHEVILLE FUND

## Application Review Process & Timeline



**Review Process:** 2-phased review process consisting of initial review and an external Review Committee made up of volunteer TPDF & LIFT Fund Committee members

# ALWAYS ASHEVILLE FUND

## Evaluation Criteria

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<b>Visitor Impact</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Level of impact in attracting visitors to Buncombe County</li><li>• Reliance on visitors for business revenue/customer base.</li></ul>
<b>Re-opening Quickly and Sustainably</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Realistic use of funds for re-opening plan.</li><li>• Degree to which the requested grant will be joined by and/or help leverage additional funds.</li><li>• Applicant's ability to access other sources of funding</li></ul>
<b>Alignment with Strategic Imperatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Business' re-opening plan alignment with one or more of BCTDA's four strategic imperatives<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Delivering Balanced &amp; Sustainable Growth</li><li>○ Encouraging Safe &amp; Responsible Travel</li><li>○ Engaging &amp; Inviting More Diverse Audiences</li><li>○ Promoting &amp; Support Asheville's Creative Spirit</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Job Recovery &amp; Retention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ability to retain employees and/or re-hire positions</li></ul>
<b>Locally-Owned &amp; Independent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Supports our unique and diverse local business community and will prioritize businesses that are independently-owned.</li></ul>

QUESTIONS  
INPUT  
COMMENTS



# CONCERT FOR CAROLINA

EXPLORE  
**ASHEVILLE**  
POWERED BY | Buncombe County Tourism  
Development Authority

# CONCERT FOR CAROLINA

## Answering the call

- Explore Asheville had been in talks with Luke Combs' team for several months about ways to partner together. Little did we know it would come in the form of Concert for Carolina.
- Within a week of Helene, Explore Asheville and the tourism development authority announced a \$1 million pledge from our operating budget as the presenting sponsor of the Concert for Carolina.
- Set aside 100+ of our tickets to host Asheville and Buncombe County first responders and their families in Charlotte.
- Hosted free livestreaming event at Thomas Wolfe Auditorium for our community and 625 attended.
- Showcased area makers through onsite partnership with Asheville Goods
- 100% of the proceeds tallying \$24.5 million to date (including our sponsorship) are coming back to our communities to important partners including Eblen Charities, MANNA Food Bank, Samaritan's Purse and Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest North Carolina and Eric Church's Chief Cares Foundation.





# RECOVERY & REOPENING MESSAGING

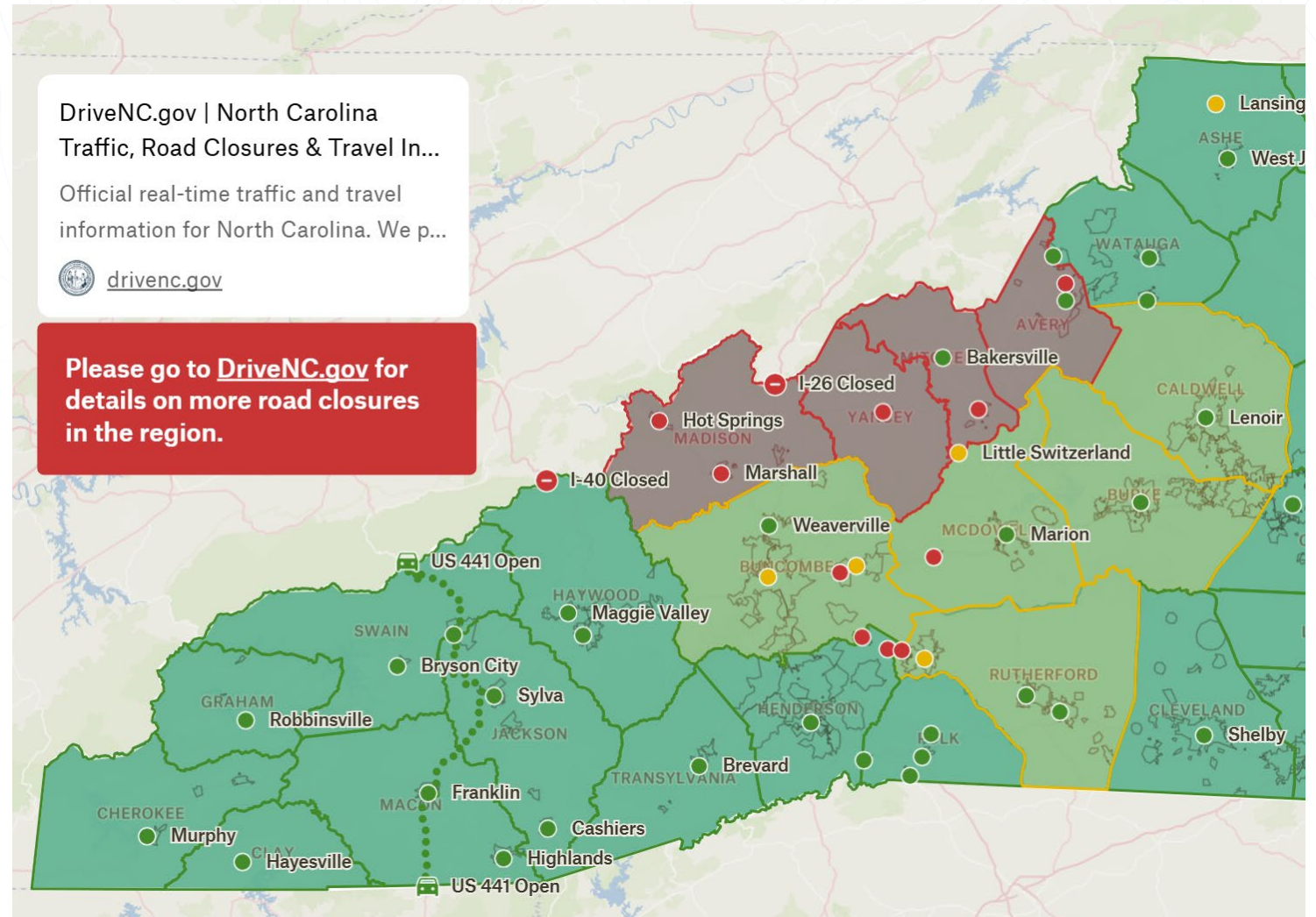
EXPLORE  
**ASHEVILLE**  
POWERED BY | Buncombe County Tourism  
Development Authority



# TRAVEL ADVISORY MAP / REOPENING MESSAGING

- Shift from pre-storm weather advisory on ExploreAsheville.com to a travel alert advisory page aligned with state.
- Worked with state officials to track and communicate status of travel restrictions and reopening, as aligned with NCDOT criteria including road status, electricity, running water and open businesses.
- Upon DOT approval, Buncombe County's status moved from red to yellow on Oct. 19.

Green - Welcoming visitors.
Yellow - Check website/call ahead for limitations.
Red - Closed to visitors with exceptions noted in yellow or green.



# KEY MESSAGES

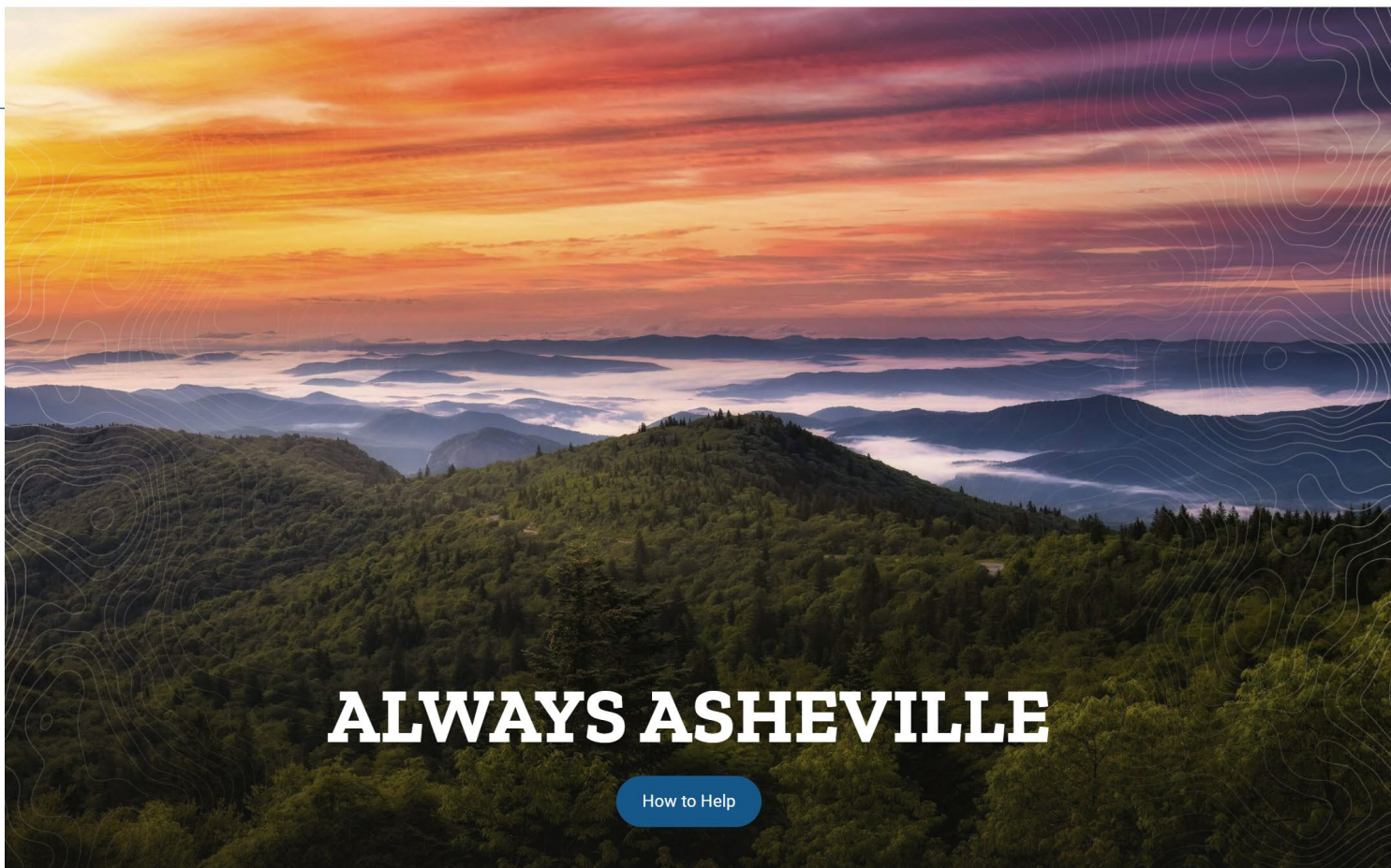
[Always.ExploreAsheville.com](https://Always.ExploreAsheville.com)

## Reopening milestones supporting communications:

- Biltmore announced reopening date of Nov. 2
- Asheville Downtown Association announced local merchants opening doors on Oct. 20
- North Carolina Arboretum announced opening of Oct. 28
- River Arts District gallery owners and business announced reopening event planned for Nov. 9-10.

## Key message evolution:

- Progress is being made slowly but surely, and safely. We are encouraging customers to support local businesses by visiting respectfully, with heart, patience and careful planning.
- Supporting reopening businesses adjacent to high impact areas as they ask for customers to return.



# ALWAYS ASHEVILLE

[How to Help](#)

## Reopening in Stages and Pockets

Like the rest of our community, Explore Asheville has been heartbroken by the devastating losses from Hurricane Helene that our region has endured. And we are heartened by the gumption, grit, and sense of community of our people and place.

Our comeback is happening in stages and pockets. Many businesses and restaurants are reopening as widespread power and water service return. The Asheville Regional Airport is open and operating. Biltmore has announced plans to welcome guests on November 2.

The Asheville area is reopening in stages and pockets after Hurricane Helene. [Learn More](#)

X

# THE HEARTBEAT OF THE BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS

Plan Your Trip

📄 Info

🛒 Shop

💰 Support

📰 News

The Asheville area is reopening in stages and pockets after Hurricane Helene. [Learn More](#)

X



# ASHEVILLE RESTAURANTS

# MARKETING MESSAGING

## Supporting Relief and Recovery Through Paid and In-Kind Partnerships

### Garden & Gun

- In-kind support sharing news of Concert for Carolina, Always Asheville Fund, and LAFA. Included branded content, sponsored newsletters and social.
- G&G Vinyl Vol 2 AVLFest featured artist recording--half of proceeds of each purchase to be donated to AAF.
- **1M+ impressions and a total value of \$102K.**

### Digital Geotargeting via TravelDesk

- Concert for Carolina digital banners driving to Always Asheville Fund (AAF).
- High Point Market digital banners driving to Love Asheville from Afar (LAFA).

### Edible Asheville & Edible Communities

- In-kind print placements in over 20 cities directing folks to LAFA online shop.

### Meetings Today

- Dedicated email featuring AAF and LAFA sent to meeting planners/suppliers.

## In the works...

- **Biltmore x Explore Asheville:** Aligned media buys in linear/traditional TV and CTV/streaming to feature bookend spots with brand and reopening messaging.
- **Activating In-Kind Paid Media Offers:** Re-envisioning our existing paid media plan to include activation of 25 in-kind ad partner offers and support.
- **iHeart Radio Partnership:** Featuring Love Asheville from Afar holiday shopping message and recovery messaging alongside holiday programming.

The image shows a screenshot of the FieldShop website, which is a platform for Garden & Gun. The website header includes the logo "FIELD SHOP BY GARDEN & GUN" and a navigation menu with options: Shop All, Bar, Kitchen, Home, Library, and Outdoor. Below the header is a large graphic featuring the "G&G" logo in white on a dark background, with a stylized circular graphic above it. Below the logo is a photograph of a live music performance on a stage with spotlights. To the right of the website screenshot is a promotional banner for "LOVE ASHEVILLE FROM AFAR". The banner features a background image of a sunset over mountains and includes the text "Lend a helping hand to the hands that make Asheville." at the top. Below the image is a blue button that says "SUPPORT NOW".

Garden & Gun proudly presents its second vinyl compilation, G&G Vol. 2. Crafted in the heart of North Carolina, it was pressed by Citizen Vinyl and showcases six Asheville-based artists—Town Mountain, Tyler Ramsey, The Resonant Rogues, Floating Action, Steep Canyon Rangers, and Alex Krug Combo, as well as additional buzz-worthy Southern talents such as Madi Diaz, Taylor McCall, Chatham County Line, and John Moreland. Curated by G&G's contributing music editor, Matt Hendrickson, each track resonates with the soulful spirit of the South.

In Partnership with Explore Asheville, Wicked Weed Brewing, and AVLFest

#### HELP ASHEVILLE BUILD BACK

To support the Asheville community in recovering from the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene in late September 2024, G&G is donating a portion of the proceeds from all vinyl sales to the Always Asheville Fund. This fund provides emergency grants to assist Asheville's small businesses in their recovery efforts. G&G stands in solidarity with Asheville and is committed to supporting local entrepreneurs and the creative community, ensuring their stories endure.

— 1 +

ADD TO CART

# SOULSHINE BENEFIT CONCERT

November 24 in NYC at Madison Square Garden

- Announced yesterday, October 29 as a benefit concert, in place of Christmas Jam usually held annually in December at the ExploreAsheville.com arena at HCCA.
- Explore Asheville supporting as a \$250,000 sponsor, with 100% of proceeds coming back to our area to support small merchants through the Always Asheville Fund.

A promotional poster for the Soulshine Benefit Concert. The background is a warm, orange and yellow sky with dark, silhouetted clouds. In the center, the word "SOULSHINE" is written in a large, white, stylized font with a drop shadow. Above it, the date "NOVEMBER 24, 2024" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font. Below the main title, the names of the headlining acts are listed in a bold, white, sans-serif font: "DAVE MATTHEWS BAND", "NATHANIEL RATELIFF & THE NIGHT SWEATS", "WARREN HAYNES BAND", and "GOOSE". Below these names, the text "FEATURING VERY SPECIAL GUESTS" is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font, followed by the names of the special guests: "TREY ANASTASIO • MAVIS STAPLES", "ROBERT RANDOLPH • JOE RUSSO", "TROMBONE SHORTY • SUSAN TEDESCHI", and "DEREK TRUCKS". At the bottom left, the text "A BENEFIT FOR HURRICANE RELIEF AND RECOVERY" is written in a white, sans-serif font. At the bottom right, the "MADISON SQUARE GARDEN" logo is displayed, with the tagline "THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS ARENA" underneath. In the bottom right corner, there are logos for "SUPPORTED BY newrez" and "AT&T Powered by Partnership".

NOVEMBER 24, 2024

**SOULSHINE**

**DAVE MATTHEWS BAND**  
**NATHANIEL RATELIFF & THE NIGHT SWEATS**  
**WARREN HAYNES BAND**  
**GOOSE**

FEATURING VERY SPECIAL GUESTS  
TREY ANASTASIO • MAVIS STAPLES  
ROBERT RANDOLPH • JOE RUSSO  
TROMBONE SHORTY • SUSAN TEDESCHI  
DEREK TRUCKS

A BENEFIT FOR  
HURRICANE RELIEF  
AND RECOVERY

MADISON SQUARE GARDEN.  
THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS ARENA

SUPPORTED BY  
newrez  
AT&T Powered by Partnership

# COOKS FOR CAROLINA

## Love from New Orleans for Asheville's Independent Restaurants

- Recognizing the urgency and the dire need for assistance, over twenty esteemed chefs and restaurant owners from New Orleans have united for a heartfelt cause—Cooks for Carolina.
- This series of dinners will provide vital support to the independent restaurants and their dedicated employees in Asheville and Buncombe County.
- 100% of proceeds of each dinner will go to the Always Asheville Fund specifically for grants for independent restaurants throughout Asheville and Buncombe County.

A New Orleans dinner series to support Asheville's independent restaurants.

[Make Your Reservation](#)



In the wake of the devastating Hurricane Helene, the culinary heart of Asheville, North Carolina, has been left shattered. Recognizing the urgency and the dire need for assistance, over twenty esteemed chefs and restaurant owners from New Orleans have united for a heartfelt cause—*Cooks for Carolina*. This series of exclusive dinners will provide vital support to the independent restaurants and their dedicated employees in Asheville and Buncombe County. **Your participation is more than a dining experience; it's a gesture of solidarity with Asheville's resilient culinary community.**

100% of proceeds of each dinner will go to the [Always Asheville fund](#).

[Make Your Reservation](#)

[Make a Direct Donation](#)

*Explore Asheville, Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority's 501(c)(6) nonprofit, has established the Always Asheville Fund to help small independent travel and hospitality businesses throughout Asheville and Buncombe County recover from the devastating impacts and aftermath of Hurricane Helene.*



# **BUSINESS CONTINUITY EFFORTS & RECOVERY RESOURCES**

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ASHEVILLE**  
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Development Authority



# FEMA CATEGORIES OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

## Understanding roles and resources

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### **Emergency Work**

President Biden approved 100% of categories A&B to be covered by Federal Government

- Category A: Debris removal
- Category B: Emergency protective measures

### **Permanent Work**

FEMA covers no less than 75 percent of the eligible cost for emergency measures and permanent restoration; increases to up to 90% with emergency disaster supplemental bill

- Category C: Roads and bridges
- Category D: Water control facilities
- Category E: Public buildings and contents
- Category F: Public utilities
- Category G: Parks, recreation, and other facilities

### **Administrative Cost**

- Category Z: Administrative cost

FEMA and the state review applications and documentation of costs, including labor, equipment, materials, contract work and administrative costs.

# FEDERAL DISASTER SUPPLEMENTAL BILL

## CDBG-DR and EAA are two pillar programs that regularly provide business recovery grants or loans

### CDBG-DR

In general, grantees (states, local governments, nonprofits) can provide direct grants to tourism-dependent businesses for certain purposes, such as working capital or rehabilitation of storefronts. With a waiver from HUD, the CDBG-DR grants can also be used for recovery marketing.

- Example of CDBG-DR grants for small businesses: A Community Development Financial Institution receives a CDBG-DR grant and creates a program that provides working capital grants to impacted small businesses for payroll, mortgage, or utility costs. (*\$929k City Council approved last week*)
- Example of CDBG-DR grants for tourism promotion: Following Hurricane Maria, HUD granted a waiver for Discover Puerto Rico to use a \$16 million grant for a tourism promotion campaign. The funds were used for market research and to develop high-quality video ads to inspire visitors to return to Puerto Rico. This should be explored for Visit NC as well as affected WNC counties.

### EAA

In general, grantees (state, local governments, nonprofits) can rebuild tourism-related infrastructure (parks, roads, riverfronts) or provide indirect assistance to tourism-dependent businesses through below-market revolving loan funds. EAA grantees are typically restricted from providing direct grants to individual businesses.

Example of EAA grants for travel promotion: The American Rescue Plan Act set aside \$750 million in EAA grants to support the travel industry's recovery from COVID-19.

EDA used the set-aside to provide block grants to States that could be used by DMO's to restore visitation through travel promotion. US Travel will likely advocate for this set-aside for impacted areas from Florida to North Carolina.

# FUNDS AVAILABLE TO BUSINESSES RIGHT NOW

## Understanding roles and resources

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### Grants for Businesses

#### Grants for Small Businesses

- Always Asheville Fund - **\$750,000 available, \$5,000 - \$10,000 award** | **Application to be released Thursday, October 31**
- Dogwood Health Trust & Appalachian Community Capital - Western North Carolina Small Business Initiative (WNC SBI) - **\$10 million** | [Application to be released October 30](#)
- Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County - Brick and Mortar Grants, **\$500 - \$5,000** | [Application](#)
- Asheville Chamber of Commerce - Mountain Strong Fund for Business Recovery | In Development

#### Grants for Arts & Culture Businesses

- National Independent Venue Foundation - National Independent Venue Relief Fund - **\$25,000 max award** | [Application](#)
- The NC Arts Foundation – NC Arts Disaster Relief Fund | In Development

#### Grants for Nonprofits

- Community Foundation WNC – Emergency and Disaster Response Fund - **\$25,000 - \$50,000 award** | [Application](#)
- United Way of North Carolina - NC Disaster Relief Fund - **\$10,000 max award** | [Application](#)
- Community Foundation WNC – WNC Long Haul Recovery & Resilience Fund | In Development

# FUNDS AVAILABLE TO BUSINESSES RIGHT NOW

## Understanding roles and resources

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### Loans for Businesses

#### Business Disaster Loans

- Mountain Bizworks - WNC Strong: Helene Business Recovery Fund Loan Program, **Up to \$100,000 per loan** | [Application](#)
- Golden Leaf Foundation – Small Business Loans (NC General Assembly passed on 10/24) - **\$50 million available** | **In Development**
- SBA - SBA Disaster Loan [Application](#)

### Grants or Stipends for Individuals

#### Grants for Hospitality, Food & Beverage Workers

- NC Restaurant & Lodging Association - NC Hospitality Workers Relief Fund | [Application](#)

#### Grants for Artists

- Center for Craft - Craft Futures Fund, **\$500 max stipend** | [Application](#)
- ArtsAVL - Emergency Relief Grant, **\$500 max stipend** | [Application](#)
- RADA Foundation - River Arts District Hurricane Helene Relief Fund **\$300 max stipend** | [Application](#)
- Asheville Fringe Festival – Artist Relief Fund, **\$250 max stipend** | **In Development**
- Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation - The Adolph & Esther Gottlieb Emergency Grant - **\$15,000 max award** | **Application**
- The NC Arts Foundation – NC Arts Disaster Relief Fund | **In Development**

# BOARD DISCUSSION

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QUESTIONS

INPUT

COMMENTS





# TPDF | LIFT FUND UPDATES

**Tiffany Thacker**  
Explore Asheville | Director of Grants

# 2024 TPDF & FY25 LIFT FUND CYCLES

Both TPDF and LIFT Fund cycles were paused following Helene

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- **2024 TPDF Cycle: paused following Hurricane Helene**
  - 5 applications were still under consideration in Phase II of the current cycle, as of September 26, 2024
  - Phase II presentations and site visits were completed
  - TPDF Review Committee Meeting, scheduled for the first week of October, was postponed to next month to allow time for applicants to reassess projects
- **FY25 LIFT Fund Cycle:** Cycle postponed until staff is able to assess the status of current projects and be able to recommend path forward for FY25 LIFT Fund cycle

# JBL SOCCER FIELDS

**Pre-Helene**



**During Helene**



**Post-Helene**





# ASHEVILLE MUNICIPAL GOLF COURSE

**Pre-Helene**



**During Helene**



**Post-Helene**



# WOODFIN GREENWAY & BLUEWAY

**Pre-Helene**



**Post-Helene**



# BOARD DISCUSSION

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QUESTIONS

INPUT

COMMENTS



# TPDF AND LIFT FUND RECOMMENDATIONS

Chair Brenda Durden

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## Questions/Comments

### Suggested Motion:

Motion to direct staff to have TPDF and LIFT Fund committees review all projects and report back on project feasibility and fund status accordingly.

## Motion Second

## Additional Discussion

## Vote





# CITY UPDATES

Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore





# COUNTY UPDATES

Commissioner Terri Wells

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Development Authority



# MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

**Brenda Durden**  
BCTDA | Chair

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ASHEVILLE**  
POWERED BY | Buncombe County Tourism  
Development Authority



# PUBLIC COMMENTS

**Brenda Durden**  
BCTDA | Chair

**EXPLORE  
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Development Authority



# LIVE VIRTUAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Brenda Durden

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Members of the Public were invited to sign-up to virtually share live comments during today's in-person BCTDA meeting.

As of the 12:00 p.m. registration deadline on Tuesday, October 29, no requests to speak had been received.



# LIVE VIRTUAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Brenda Durden

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Upon arrival to this morning's BCTDA meeting, anyone who indicated a desire to make public comments completed the Public Comment Sign-In Sheet, affirming they agree to abide by the Rules of Decorum.



# A FEW REMINDERS

Chair Brenda Durden

Additional materials, including the PowerPoint presentation, will be posted online later today.

The next BCTDA meeting will be held on **THURSDAY, November 21, 2024, at 9:00 a.m.** in the Explore Asheville Board Room

For more information go to:

- [AshevilleCVB.com](https://www.ashevillecvb.com)
- About the Buncombe County TDA section
- Find out about upcoming BCTDA meetings or Review past BCTDA meeting minutes & documents

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[About Buncombe County TDA](#) [Visitor Information](#) [Partner Login](#)

[What We Do](#) [Business Toolkit](#) [Research & Reports](#) [News & Events](#) [Community Programs](#)  
[COVID-19 Resources](#) [Contact Us](#)

## About the Buncombe County TDA

### What is the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority?

The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority is the public authority created in 1983 by an act of the North Carolina Legislature to oversee the collection and investment of **occupancy taxes** paid by travelers who stay overnight in commercial lodging establishments, such as hotels and motels, bed and breakfast operations, and vacation rentals such as Airbnb and VRBOs. The members of the Buncombe County TDA Board have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the tax dollars are spent in accordance with the specific legislation governing their use.

- [Meet the members of the Buncombe County TDA Board >>](#)
- [Find out about upcoming BCTDA meetings >>](#)
- [Review past BCTDA meeting minutes & documents >>](#)
- [Read past editions of the Tourism Community Update, providing highlights of BCTDA meetings >>](#)



# ADJOURNMENT

Chair Brenda Durden

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Questions/Comments

**Suggested Motion:**

**Motion to adjourn the BCTDA Meeting.**

Motion Second

Discussion

Vote





# THANK YOU

*See you at the next BCTDA meeting!*

**Thursday, November 21, 2024 | 9:00 a.m.**

Explore Asheville Board Room | 27 College Place