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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:
David Bone
County Manager
252-789-4300
dbone@martincountyncgov.com

Martin County Receives \$900,000 CDBG-CV Grant Award to Assist Residents Recover from Impacts from the COVID-19 Pandemic

WILLIAMSTON, NC – Martin County has been awarded \$900,000 in grant funds to provide utilities payment and rent assistance to qualifying citizens affected by the coronavirus pandemic.

On August 25, 2020, the state announced a new grant program for local governments. NC Commerce’s Community Development Block Grant Coronavirus (CDBG-CV) grant program is designed to help local governments and communities respond to the health and economic impacts of COVID-19. Martin County applied for the grant in September and received notice of a CDBG-CV grant award of \$900,000 on October 16th.

Initially, the State will provide approximately \$28.5 million in funds received from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to support North Carolina’s COVID-19 response efforts. This allocation was authorized by the federal CARES Act of 2020, Public Law 116-136.

The primary objective of the County proposal is to provide up to 6 months of emergency utility payments to prevent service disconnection of electricity, water, sewer, gas, internet, and telephone services. A second objective is to provide up to 6 months’ emergency rent/mortgage payments to prevent eviction and homelessness.

“The CDBG-CV grant is a new program, and Martin County and its partners worked diligently to prepare and submit the grant application expeditiously. We are tremendously thankful for this grant award. We are excited about the resources the grant will provide to help low and moderate income citizens in dealing with the financial impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic”, said County Manager David Bone.

The Choanoke Area Development Association, or CADA, will be a vital partner in Martin County’s CDBG-CV program. Sallie Surface, the Executive Director of CADA, stated, “This initiative, which

is a new source of funding, is essential to impacting the looming housing crisis that will occur when moratoriums and forbearances for mortgages, rental payments and utilities expires. The grant will help prevent increased homelessness, foreclosures, and bankruptcies. It will help our children have a safe place to learn and residents to be safely housed. The grant will also help boost the county's economy, since most payments made on behalf of residents will be to local utilities and businesses that have also been hurt by the pandemic".

Once the grant agreement is received and executed, Martin County will contract with an experienced CDBG Grant Administrator consultant, which will provide technical assistance to CADA for the income verification requirements.

Assistance payments and number of households assisted are contingent upon: 1) eligibility determination from NC Commerce, 2) income verification of each household, and 3) verification of no duplication of benefits.

A cap will be established for each household in order to provide assistance to as many households as possible, with more assistance intended for very low- and low- income households than moderate-income households.

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