

FEMA Strives to Leave No One Behind

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FEMA customer service teams are calling applicants with disabilities to provide personal assistance as part of the agency's commitment to ensure disaster recovery resources are available to everyone who was affected by Tropical Storm Helene.

Disasters are traumatic for everyone including the 20% of Americans who have some form of physical, mental health, sensory, intellectual or cognitive disability. A disaster can take away the key components that enable people with disabilities or access and functional needs to live independently or to communicate with others.

Tennesseans in **Carter, Cocke, Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins, Johnson, Unicoi** and **Washington** counties who have applied for FEMA assistance may receive a call, text or email from the customer service team. Calls and texts may come from an unknown number. Applicants are encouraged to answer these calls. Beware of fraud calls — only FEMA knows an applicant's nine-digit application number. FEMA representatives can provide this number to verify it is a legitimate FEMA call.

FEMA is reviewing applications and reaching out to survivors who may benefit from an additional level of assistance. FEMA is working to be proactive in meeting the needs of the whole community, including survivors who are experiencing barriers in their recovery.

The specialists ensure that all survivors, particularly those with additional needs, receive the assistance they need to rebuild and recover. The specialists are also reaching out to learn about disability-related needs such as medical support assistance, medical equipment repairs, or replacement of assistive technology lost or damaged during the **Sept. 26-30** storms.

Remember that help from FEMA is just a phone call away. Survivors can get answers from trained specialists at the **FEMA Helpline at 800-621-FEMA (3362)**.

