

# Biden-Harris Administration Continues Whole-Of-Government Response to Hurricane Helene, Over 3,500 Federal Personnel Across North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, South Carolina and Alabama

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***FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell is in North Carolina and Will Remain There Until the Situation Has Stabilized, As Directed by President Biden, Administrator Criswell was also in Florida and Georgia***

WASHINGTON – FEMA and federal, state, community and voluntary partners continue providing resources to aid response efforts across the Southeast as survivors begin recovering from Hurricane Helene. More than **3,500 personnel from across the federal workforce** are deployed and supporting Hurricane Helene response efforts across the impacted states – **more than 1,000 are from FEMA**. Across the impacted states, FEMA has **shipped over 1.9 million Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), more than 1 million liters of water, 30 generators and over 95,000 tarps**.

The Biden-Harris Administration declared Major Disaster declarations for areas of [Florida](#), [North Carolina](#) and [South Carolina](#), allowing disaster survivors to begin their recovery process by applying for federal assistance through FEMA. **People in 17 counties in Florida, 25 counties in North Carolina and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians**, as well as **13 counties in South Carolina** can now apply for assistance with FEMA.

People with damage to their homes or personal property who live in the designated counties are encouraged to apply for assistance, which may include upfront funds to help with essential items like food, water, baby formula and other



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emergency supplies. Funds may also be available to repair storm-related damage to homes and personal property, as well as assistance to find a temporary place to stay.

There are three ways to apply for FEMA assistance:

- **Online by visiting [disasterassistance.gov](https://disasterassistance.gov).**
- **Calling 1-800-621-3362.**
- **Download and apply on the [FEMA App](#).**

Homeowners and renters with damage to their home or personal property from previous disasters, whether they received FEMA funds or not, are still eligible to apply for and receive assistance for Hurricane Helene.

Voluntary organizations are also providing personnel and resources to the hardest hit areas. The American Red Cross has more than 850 trained disaster workers providing comfort and operating shelters. They are also helping find loved ones through their helpline **1-800-RED-CROSS** (1-800-733-2767). If someone is missing a child related to this disaster or any other incident, they need to call **9-1-1** and then **1-800-THE-LOST** to receive assistance from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children.

People can receive free services like cutting fallen trees, tarping roofs and mold mitigation with the help of Crisis Cleanup by calling **844-965-1386**. The hotline is open through October 11 and can connect people with volunteers from local relief organizations, community groups and the faith-based community who may be able to assist.

While the impacts of Hurricane Helene are widespread and affecting a number of states simultaneously, each disaster is unique. Below is a list of tips and resources that people can use to help address the needs they are facing in their community as well as key operational updates.

## North Carolina

- People can get in touch with loved ones by **calling 2-1-1 or visit [unitedwaync.org](https://unitedwaync.org)** to fill out a request form to add them to search and rescue efforts.



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- Rescue crews are continuing to work in affected areas and utility crews are working to restore cell service and critical infrastructure to restore communications to the impacted areas. People should not travel to western North Carolina to keep the roadways clear.
- **With 10 search and rescue teams on the ground, another nine teams are arriving today for more than 900 personnel to assist with these efforts.**
- **Two FEMA Incident Management Assessment Teams** are in North Carolina. The team will coordinate directly with the state to facilitate requests for assistance.
- So far, **25 trailer-loads of meals** and **60 trailers-loads of water** have been delivered to the state to support response efforts. More trailer loads of meals and water will be delivered in the coming days.
- **A C-17 cargo plane full of food, water and other commodities has arrived** at the forward operating base in Asheville, with a daily flow of commodities established via air bridge.
- There are **29 shelters open with over 1,000 occupants.**
- **40 Starlink satellite systems** are available to help with responder communications and an additional **140 satellites** are being shipped to assist with communications infrastructure restoration.
- **One Starlink will be deployed per county EOC** to assist with communications and continuity of government.
- Generators are moving from Charlotte-Mecklenberg to Asheville, with another 30 generators enroute to the staging base in Mecklenburg.
- Disaster Medical Assistance Teams are in Asheville providing emergency room medical support at hospitals.
- **200 federal ambulances** have been provided to the state.
- FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance teams are going to the field, focusing on shelters, where they will assist survivors in applying for assistance.

## Florida

- Residents in need of information can call the State Assistance Information Line (SAIL) at **1-800-342-3557** for resources after Helene. English, Spanish and Creole speakers are available to answer questions.
- **Two FEMA Incident Management Assistance Teams** are onsite at the state Emergency Operations Center in Tallahassee to coordinate with the state and facilitate any requests for assistance.



- **30 FEMA Division Supervisors are embedded in 21 Florida county Emergency Operations Centers.**
- All federal Urban Search and Rescue teams have been released from the state to assist other affected states.

## Georgia

- Residents can find a list of open shelters and report damage by visiting [Hurricane Helene | Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency](#).
- Partners like the Salvation Army, First Baptist Church and others are supporting feeding efforts on the ground.
- **A FEMA Incident Management Assistance Team** is onsite at the state Emergency Operations Center to coordinate with the state and facilitate any requests for assistance.
- All federal Urban Search and Rescue Teams have been released after completing missions in southern and eastern parts of the state.
- FEMA is providing meals, tarps and water to the state for those impacted by the storm.
- FEMA continues to work with the state on damage assessment to help with federal assistance.

## South Carolina

- Residents with questions on Hurricane Helene can call the state's toll-free hotline, open **24 hours a day, at 1-866-246-0133.**
- As people begin to clean up, they should watch for downed powerlines, take pictures and document damage and discard items that cannot be properly disinfected.
- Those who are dependent on medical equipment at home and are without power due to Helene may be eligible for a medical needs shelter. **Call the state's Department of Public Health Care Line at 1-855-472-3432** to see if you are eligible and if a medical needs shelter is available in your area.
- **A FEMA Incident Management Assistance Team** is onsite at the state Emergency Operations Center in Columbia to coordinate with the state and facilitate any requests for assistance.

## Tennessee



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- The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation has established a hotline to coordinate reports of missing person in the affected by the flooding in Northeast Tennessee. **Call 1-800-824-3463 to report a missing person.** Callers should be prepared to relay as much information as possible including names, phone numbers, vehicle identification and last known whereabouts.
- **A FEMA Incident Management Assistance Team** is onsite at the state Emergency Operations Center in Nashville to coordinate with the state and facilitate any requests for assistance.
- **About 90 federal Urban Search & Rescue personnel are on the ground in Knoxville.**

## Alabama

- **A FEMA Incident Management Assistance Team** is onsite at the state Emergency Operations Center in Clanton to coordinate with the state and facilitate any requests for federal assistance.

## Federal, state and local officials, volunteer agencies and private sector partners are providing the following support:

- **The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** declared a Public Health Emergency for Florida, Georgia and North Carolina.
- **The Department of Defense has 30 high-water trucks ready to assist rescuers and 18 helicopters** that can transport supplies, equipment and teams.
- **The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers** deployed teams for temporary emergency power, debris removal and infrastructure assessment of water/wastewater treatment facilities and road/bridges.
- **The Environmental Protection Agency** has personnel on the ground who are working closely with federal, state, local, and Tribal partners to prepare for and safely remove hazardous materials and debris and maintain critical public health and environmental protections in place as storm impacts are assessed.
- **The U.S. Small Business Administration deployed more than 50 personnel** to support people and small businesses as they recover from the hurricane.
- **The U.S. Department of Energy** is closely monitoring impacts and restoration efforts, and have responders deployed to the Florida Emergency Operations Center, Georgia Emergency Operations Center, and the North Carolina Emergency Operations Center. and are closely monitoring power, fuel and supply chain interruptions.



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- **Team Rubicon has a Route Clearance Team** in the Big Bend of Florida, and two more are coordinating damage assessment. Additional teams are deploying to Georgia and Tennessee.
- **The American Red Cross** has more than **850 volunteer responders** deployed to the affected areas supporting shelters and reunification efforts and **another 230 are in transit.**
- **The Salvation Army** is coordinating with county emergency management agencies and partner organizations. In Georgia, meal services are underway in Valdosta, Alma, Vidalia, with **six units serving Chatham County and Augusta.** North Carolina's Incident Management Team is activated, with **two canteens in Boone and Buncombe County.** South Carolina has **two active units in Saluda and Aiken.** In Tennessee our Incident Management Team is traveling to Johnson City to start serving meals immediately to survivors. **In Florida, there are 22 mobile feeding units and with five more on the way.** And in Virginia, The Salvation Army is feeding at an Emergency Operations Center and will be feeding those who are experiencing power outages.



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