

As Biden-Harris Administration Continues Search and Rescue, Response and Recovery Efforts Across Southeast, Federal Aid for Survivors Surpasses \$110 Million

Release Date: October 5, 2024

WASHINGTON -- As response and recovery efforts continue across the Southeast in the wake of Hurricane Helene, FEMA remains committed to ensuring that survivors receive accurate information on federal assistance. The agency is actively working alongside state, local and tribal partners to assess damage and support those affected by the disaster.

FEMA has already helped thousands of Hurricane Helene survivors jumpstart their recoveries with more than **\$110 million** in federal assistance. More than **6,400** personnel from across the federal workforce are deployed, including FEMA staff. To date, FEMA has shipped over **13.2** million meals, more than **13.4** million liters of water, **157** generators and more than **492,000** tarps to the region.

Disaster survivors in certain areas of [Georgia](#), [Florida](#), [North Carolina](#), [South Carolina](#), [Tennessee](#) and [Virginia](#) can begin their recovery process by applying for federal assistance through FEMA. People with damage to their homes or personal property who live in the designated areas should apply for assistance, which may include upfront funds to help with essential items like food, water, baby formula, breastfeeding supplies and other 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. 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.

There are three ways to apply for FEMA assistance:



FEMA

Page 1 of 6

- Calling FEMA Helpline at 1-800-621-3362.
- Online by visiting disasterassistance.gov.
- Downloading and applying on the [FEMA App](#).

Support for North Carolina

Financial Support: FEMA has provided **more than \$26 million in housing and other types of assistance** to over **25,000 households**.

Staffing: In North Carolina, **more than 700 FEMA staff** are on the ground, with more arriving daily. Over **1,200 Urban Search and Rescue personnel** are in North Carolina helping people. As of today, these teams have **rescued or supported over 3,200 survivors**. Dozens of Disaster Survivor Assistance staff are on the ground in affected areas to help survivors apply for FEMA assistance and connect them with additional state, local, federal and voluntary agency resources. **Over 1,000 National Guard Bureau troops** have deployed to North Carolina to support response and recovery efforts. To date, troops have delivered nearly one million pounds of food, water and other supplies. **Experienced FEMA leaders** from around the country are in the field to bolster response efforts. **Field Coordinating Officer Thomas McCool, Region 3 Regional Administrator MaryAnn Tierney, Region 7 Regional Administrator Andrea Spillars and Chief Financial Officer Mary Comans** are on the ground overseeing response operations.

Sheltering: Over 800 people who cannot return home are staying in safe and clean lodging through FEMA's Transitional Shelter Assistance program. [Transitional Sheltering Assistance](#) is available for North Carolinians displaced by Tropical Storm Helene. Residents in declared counties who have applied for disaster assistance may be eligible to stay temporarily in a hotel or motel paid for by FEMA while they work on their long-term housing plan. People do not need to request this assistance. FEMA will notify them of their eligibility through an automated phone call, text message, and/or email, depending upon the method of communication they selected at the time of application for disaster assistance. **Twenty-two shelters** are housing just **over 1,000 occupants**. Mobile feeding operations continue to help survivors in heavily impacted areas, including three mass feeding sites in Buncombe, McDowell and Watauga counties.



Power and Cellular Restoration: As of today, **more than 74% of originally reported power outages have been restored. Nearly 8,000 crews** continue to assist with remaining power restoration efforts. Cellular restoration continues to improve, with **less than 25% of cellular sites down** as of today. As of today, only **two counties have 50% or more cell sites down**. Two Federal Communications Commission surveillance teams are conducting inspection operations on equipment in targeted counties. FEMA is boosting response coordination by providing **Starlink units to ensure first responders** can communicate with each other. The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians has full mobile cellular service.

Commodities: Commodity distribution, mass feeding, and hydration operations are underway in areas of western North Carolina. FEMA commodity shipments are enroute to support operations. The agency is on track to meet requested delivery timelines for meals and water. Voluntary organizations are supporting feeding operations with bulk food and water deliveries coming via truck and aircraft. The Salvation Army has **nine mobile feeding units** supporting the massive operation and has provided emotional and spiritual care to more than 300 people. To date, The Salvation Army has served over **7,100 meals, 6,600 drinks, and 3,700 snacks**. The American Red Cross is engaging in targeted distribution of emergency supplies in low-income communities with high levels of minor or affected residential damage.

Resources:

- Residents can visit: ncdps.gov/helene to get information and additional assistance.
- Residents should not travel to western North Carolina to keep the roadways clear for search and rescue teams and utility crews.
- Residents can get in touch with loved ones by **calling 2-1-1** or **visiting unitedwaync.org** to add them to search and rescue efforts.

Support for Florida

FEMA has provided more than **\$40 million** to more than **8,000 households**. FEMA specialists are canvassing Florida communities impacted by Hurricane Helene to help survivors apply for assistance. Additionally, FEMA inspectors have begun visiting applicants' homes to verify disaster-caused damage.



Residents in need of information or resources should call the State Assistance Information Line (SAIL) at **1-800-342-3557**. English, Spanish and Creole speakers are available to answer questions.

Support for South Carolina

On Friday, President Biden announced 100% cost-share for a period of time to make recovery more affordable for the state.

In South Carolina, FEMA has provided over **\$4.7 million** to over 5,700 households. FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams are on the ground in neighborhoods across the affected counties continuing to help survivors apply for FEMA assistance and connect them with additional state, local, federal and voluntary agency resources. South Carolina is monitoring river rises along coastal communities.

Residents with questions on Hurricane Helene can call the state's toll-free hotline, open 24 hours a day, at **1-866-246-0133**.

Residents who are dependent on medical equipment at home and who 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** for more information.

Support for Georgia

FEMA has provided over **\$29 million to over 35,000 survivors**. FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams are on the ground in neighborhoods across the affected counties helping survivors apply for FEMA assistance and connecting them with additional state, local, federal and voluntary agency resources.

Resources: Residents can find resources like shelters and feeding sites at gema.georgia.gov/hurricane-helene.

Support for Virginia



FEMA

Page 4 of 6

On Friday, President Biden announced 100% cost-share for a period of time to make recovery more affordable for the commonwealth. To date, FEMA has provided **more than \$230,000 to over 50 households**. FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams are on the ground in neighborhoods across the affected counties helping survivors apply for FEMA assistance and connecting them with additional state, local, federal and voluntary agency resources.

Residents can find resources like shelters and feeding sites at: [Recover – Hurricane Helene | VDEM \(vaemergency.gov\)](#)

Support for Tennessee

FEMA has received more than **2,300 applications for disaster assistance**. FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams are on the ground in neighborhoods across the affected counties helping survivors apply for FEMA assistance and connecting them with additional state, local, federal and voluntary agency resources.

- Residents can call **1-800-824-3463 to report a missing person**. Callers should be prepared to provide as much information as possible including names, phone numbers, vehicle identification and last known whereabouts.
- Counties have started establishing donation centers. For the evolving list, visit [TEMA's website](#).

Voluntary Organizations

Voluntary organizations are also providing personnel and resources to the hardest hit areas. The American Red Cross has hundreds of **trained disaster workers providing comfort and operating shelters**. Additionally, they are helping find loved ones through their helpline **1-800-RED-CROSS** (1-800-733-2767) or by the [Red Cross Hurricane Helene Reunification page](#) where you can enter pertinent information about the person you're looking for. 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



FEMA

Page 5 of 6

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.



FEMA