

# Serious Needs Assistance

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**Release Date: Oct 16, 2024**

Serious Needs Assistance is available to eligible Tennesseans affected by Tropical Storm Helene. If you have an immediate or serious need resulting from the storm, you may qualify for a one-time payment for each household.

## What is Serious Needs Assistance?

This is money awarded to applicants who have necessary expenses or need emergency supplies like water, food, first aid, breast-feeding supplies, infant formula, diapers, personal hygiene items or fuel for transportation. It is available in all major disasters declared for Individual Assistance.

To watch an accessible video about Serious Needs Assistance, go to [FEMA Accessible: Serious Needs Assistance \(youtube.com\)](#).

## Who can get Serious Needs Assistance?

You may be eligible if:

- You complete a FEMA application for assistance
- You or someone in your home is a U.S. citizen, non-citizen national, or qualified non-citizen
- FEMA can confirm your identity
- Your home is in a declared disaster area
- You live in your home most of the year
- You apply for FEMA assistance while Serious Needs Assistance is available; and
  - The disaster damaged your home. FEMA confirms this based on an inspection or document
  - or
  - You tell FEMA you are displaced, need shelter or have other emergency costs due to the disaster on your application.



## How much Serious Needs Assistance can I get?

The amount authorized for Tennessee survivors of Tropical Storm Helene is a **one-time payment of \$770** per eligible household. This payment would be in addition to other types of FEMA assistance you're eligible for.

## When can I get Serious Needs Assistance?

Serious Needs Assistance is available for survivors who apply during the **first 30 days** after a disaster is declared. In Tennessee, a major presidential disaster was declared for Tropical Storm Helene on **Wednesday, Oct. 2**.

### I need help before my inspection.

#### Can I get Serious Needs Assistance faster?

Yes. FEMA may provide Serious Needs Assistance to survivors in the hardest hit areas before their inspection. If you don't get a faster payment because FEMA isn't able to confirm your information, you may still be able to receive Serious Needs Assistance after your inspection.

### I didn't get Serious Needs Assistance after my inspection. Can I still get help?

Yes. If you applied while Serious Needs Assistance is available, but didn't get help after your inspection, FEMA will send a decision letter explaining the reason for ineligibility. If you received your decision letter within the first 30 days after the Oct. 2 declaration, you can use the letter to appeal for Serious Needs Assistance.

You may need to send more information about:

- Your identity or where you live, or
- The repairs or clean-up needed because of disaster damage to your home.

### I have insurance and haven't had a FEMA inspection. Can I still get help?



Yes. You can still get Serious Needs Assistance by sending FEMA your insurance information on repairs or clean-up you made or need to do because of disaster damage to your home.

You may need to send more information about:

- Any receipts or estimates from contractors or service providers to repair disaster damage, or
- Documents from your landlord about disaster damages to your home.

## **Can I still get Serious Needs Assistance if my home wasn't damaged, but I had emergency costs?**

You may be eligible for Serious Needs Assistance if you tell FEMA you are displaced, need shelter or have other emergency costs due to the disaster on your application and meet other basic eligibility requirements.

## **I don't agree with FEMA's decision. How can I appeal?**

If you don't agree with FEMA's decision, you can appeal by showing why you need FEMA assistance. The letter you get from FEMA will have more information about the types of documents you should send.

You may use an optional Appeal Request form, which is included in the decision letter you receive from FEMA. You can also choose to write and sign a letter to send with your documents to help FEMA understand why you need help.

## **How can I send documents?**

You may send supporting documents to FEMA several ways:

- Upload to your disaster assistance account at [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov)
- Mail: **FEMA, P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055**
- Fax: **800-827-8112**
- Visit a **Disaster Recovery Center**. Find one here: [fema.gov/drc](https://fema.gov/drc).

