

Federal Assistance for Hurricane Helene Survivors Surpasses \$137 Million as Biden-Harris Administration Continues Response and Recovery Efforts in Southeast and Closely Monitors Storm in the Gulf

Release Date: ?? 6, 2024

WASHINGTON -- FEMA continues its robust response and recovery efforts in the Southeast following the devastation caused by Helene. Federal assistance for survivors has now surpassed \$137 million, with FEMA's mission remaining steadfast in helping communities recover and rebuild.

FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell is leading one of the largest mobilizations of federal personnel, partners and resources in recent history to heed the call of helping survivors and bolstering efforts across all levels of government. The agency is actively working alongside state, local and tribal partners to assess damage and support those affected by the disaster. Nearly **7,000** personnel from across the federal workforce are deployed, including FEMA staff. To date, FEMA has shipped over **14.9** million meals, more than **13.9** million liters of water, **157** generators and more than **505,000** tarps to the region.

As response and recovery efforts continue in the Southeast, FEMA is closely monitoring Tropical Storm Milton, which has formed in the Gulf of Mexico. FEMA has the resources and capacity to address multiple disasters simultaneously and is fully prepared to support affected communities wherever and whenever needed. Preparedness efforts are underway and FEMA stands ready to respond to any potential impacts on communities in the storm's path while also prioritizing search and rescue, response and recovery efforts in in the affected areas. People in Milton's path should take the storm seriously and **prepare now**.



FEMA

Page 1 of 6

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 Helene.

There are three ways to apply for FEMA assistance:

- 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 approved **more than \$30 million in housing and other types of assistance** for over **27,000 households**.

Staffing: As response efforts continue in North Carolina, **more than 700 FEMA staff** are on the ground, with more arriving daily. Over **1,200 Urban Search and Rescue personnel** remain in the field helping people. These teams have **rescued or supported over 3,200 survivors to date**. 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.

Sheltering: Over **800** people who cannot return home are staying in safe and clean lodging through FEMA's Transitional Sheltering Assistance program.



[Transitional Sheltering Assistance](#) is available for North Carolinians displaced by 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.

Shelter numbers continue to decline, with **22 shelters** housing just **under 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 **86%** of originally reported power outages have been restored. Cellular restoration continues to improve, with **less than 20% of cellular sites down**. FEMA is boosting response coordination by providing **Starlink units to ensure first responders** can communicate with each other.

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 900 people. To date, The Salvation Army has served over **12,600** meals, **9,600** drinks and **5,600** 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 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

As recovery efforts continue in Florida, FEMA has approved more than **\$71 million** for over **11,000 households**. FEMA specialists are canvassing Florida communities affected by Helene to help survivors apply for assistance. Additionally, FEMA inspectors are 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

As recovery efforts continue in South Carolina, FEMA has approved over **\$5.7 million for more than 5,500** 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.

Residents with questions on 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 approved over **\$30 million for more than 38,000 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.



FEMA

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

Support for Virginia

To date, FEMA has approved **more than \$330,000 for over 60 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 approved more than **\$175,000 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 people can enter pertinent information about the person they're looking for. If someone is missing a child



FEMA

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.

