

## **D-SNAP (Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)**

**D-SNAP (Spanish)** is a temporary disaster food assistance program for individuals impacted by natural disasters like Hurricane Helene. In accordance with federal rules, applications for D-SNAP benefits in WNC closed on October 24 (Oct. 25 for five counties). Individuals who pre-registered for D-SNAP by October 24 at 4 p.m. but were unable to reach the call center to complete their interview received a call from county DSS officials by November 1.

As of October 30, 69,823 households (176,260 individuals) in 25 WNC counties and members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians who live in zip code 28719 have been approved to receive benefits, which total over \$42 million in financial support for western North Carolinians. D-SNAP benefits are issued on Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) cards that can be used at retailers that accept EBT cards, and benefits can be used for nine months. Households should call the toll-free number 1-888-622-7328 to change their PIN to a “difficult” PIN once they receive their D-SNAP card. If you lost your D-SNAP card, you can call the EBT Call Center at 866-719-0141 to request a replacement card.

### **Additional Resources for Food Support:**

- [NC Food and Nutrition Services](#)
- [NC WIC Program](#)
- [NC WIC Flexibilities in Response to Hurricane Helene](#)
- [Local Food Resources \(2-1-1\)](#)

## **Debris Removal, Clean Up and Storage**

Staying safe throughout the recovery process is absolutely critical. The NC Department of Public Safety offers [tips and guides](#) on topics ranging from debris removal to mold cleanup, well water testing, septic repairs and more.

### **What’s happening with debris?**

It is important to dispose of waste from the storm properly to prevent contamination. Concerns have been raised about the locations of debris collection sites, particularly near housing areas in Buncombe County.

Please note, the debris collection site near Westmoreland and Deaverview apartments is closed. Efforts are underway with partners, including the Department of Environmental Quality, to assess other debris sites and their impact.

Burning of debris is minimized but may be necessary. Local health departments and the Army Corps of Engineers are working to provide more information.

### **How can North Carolinians stay safe around dust and debris?**

- Dust and particulate matter concerns are heightened following dry conditions post-hurricane, with respiratory symptoms being reported. A guide regarding exposure is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).
- Recommended precautions include staying indoors, keeping windows and doors closed, and using community spaces with filtered air if needed.
- N-95 masks are advised for outdoor work or cleanup, especially in dusty conditions.
- [Online resources and videos](#) are available on mold cleanup, toilet safety, well and septic system maintenance, and hand hygiene without clean water.

### **Private Well Disinfection and Testing**

- It is critical people do not drink or use water from a private well that has been damaged or flooded until it has been properly assessed for damage, disinfected, tested and cleared for use.
- NCDHHS is providing [free well disinfection and well water collection kits](#) for testing that are being distributed through local health departments and other partners. About 40% of samples that have been tested to date include harmful bacteria. Please protect yourself and your loved ones by getting your private well tested.

### **Shelter and Housing Assistance**

While shelters are still readily available, we know that people are anxious to return to their homes. A number of federal, state, and nonprofit programs are available to North Carolinians at all stages of recovery. Here are just a few:

- **Multi-Agency Shelter Transition Teams (MASTT)**  
Teams are working in four shelters across Buncombe, Yancey, and Transylvania counties in North Carolina to create short- and long-term housing plans.
- **American Red Cross**  
The American Red Cross currently has 7 shelters for people and their pets.  
[View current open shelter locations.](#)
- **Back@Home Program**  
[Back@Home](#) offers housing navigation, case management, rental, and utility assistance in 26 impacted counties.

## **Physical and Mental Health Resources**

Taking care of yourself during recovery from a disaster like Hurricane Helene is important for both residents and relief workers. Both physical and mental health are equally important.

### **It's sick season. How can people access vaccines?**

As a result of the storm, some vaccine supplies were lost. Local health departments are working with the state immunization branch to replenish vaccine stocks in Western North Carolina. More vaccines are being distributed to the region.

Community members are encouraged to receive seasonal vaccinations for COVID-19 and flu – especially with frequent exposure to dust and debris. Additionally, individuals should check with their healthcare providers to ensure they are up to date on tetanus vaccinations, especially if handling debris.

For those in Buncombe County, [Buncombe County Mobile Services is offering free flu, COVID-19, and Tdap Vaccines](#). Vaccines are also available at the Buncombe County Health Department.

## Where can people access mental health resources?

**NCDHHS** has deployed crisis counselors in shelters and communities to support mental health recovery from Hurricane Helene. The following are resources currently available to support those in Western North Carolina:

- [Julian F. Keith Alcohol and Drug Abuse Treatment Center](#)
- [Weathering the Storm - Mental Health and Disability-related Resources](#)
- [Somethings - Mental Health Services for Teens](#)
- [Children with Special Health Care Needs Help Line](#)
- [Hope for NC Helpline – support for first responders and volunteers](#)
- [988 Suicide and Crisis Hotline](#)

## Comprehensive Services (Food, Housing, Transportation, Health and More)

It is hard to grasp all of the resources needed to support those impacted by the storm, however, many federal, state and local partners are working tirelessly to fill those gaps.

- [FEMA \(Federal Emergency Management Agency\)](#)  
Provides housing assistance and financial assistance. It will supplement other resources but does not fully restore losses. They also look to [dispel rumors and misinformation](#) that often follow disasters of this scale.
- [Healthy Opportunities Pilot \(HOP\) Program](#)  
Operating in 18 counties in Western NC. Eligible individuals must meet clinical criteria and have Medicaid enrollment and be from one of the covered counties.
- [NC Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster \(VOAD\)](#)  
[VOAD](#) helps to coordinate volunteer response throughout the region.

## Additional Services and Resources

- [FEMA Disaster Assistance: Citizenship and Immigration Status Requirements](#)
- [DSS Directory - Local Social Services Agencies](#)
- [Impact Health - Critical Social Needs Within Medical Care](#)
- [Hurricane Helene Recovery Communications Toolkit](#)

**The next Hurricane Helene recovery webinar and tele-town hall will take place on November 20th at noon.** Further details will be shared soon. We hope you can join us. Until then, for general information, access to resources, or answers to frequently asked questions, please visit [ncdhhs.gov/helene](https://ncdhhs.gov/helene).