

# North Carolina Tropical Storm Helene Recovery

Oct. 9, 2024

## Ongoing Tropical Storm Response

FEMA has approved more than **\$60 million** in housing and other types of assistance for over **51,000 households**. FEMA is directly paying hotels for emergency sheltering for more than **1,000 households** through FEMA's Transitional Sheltering Assistance.

Recovery efforts are being supported by **5,000 federal personnel** on the ground in North Carolina.

FEMA is actively supporting the **North Carolina National Guard** with **1,500 active-duty service members** to support the delivery of meals, water, and other commodities to heavily impacted and isolated communities. Yesterday, active-duty service members distributed more than **690 cases of water**, **140 cases of shelf-stable meals**, and **three pallets of humanitarian assistance items**.

**Seventeen shelters** are housing just under **800 occupants**. Mobile feeding operations continue to help survivors in heavily affected areas, including **20 Salvation Army Mobile Feeding Units** and **three mass feeding sites** in Buncombe, McDowell and Watauga counties.

**Search and rescue operations** are ongoing in western North Carolina.

As of today, more than **90%** of originally reported power outages have been restored. Nearly **8,000 crews** continue to assist with remaining power restoration efforts. Approximately **100,000** customers are without power. Cellular restoration continues to improve, with more than **85%** of cellular sites in service as of today. Only one county remains with **50%** or more cell sites down.

The **U.S. Department of Health and Human Services** activated the **Emergency Prescription Assistance Program (EPAP)** for North Carolina to aid uninsured residents in replacing prescription medicines or certain medical equipment lost or damaged in Hurricane Helene that impacted communities in the area.

The **Federal Aviation Administration** is helping ensure safety for aircraft conducting Hurricane Helene rescue and recovery activities. To learn more, visit [Operating Near Hurricane Helene Recovery Efforts | Federal Aviation Administration \(faa.gov\)](https://www.faa.gov/pressroom/newsroom/stories/2024/09/operating-near-hurricane-helene-recovery-efforts).



Service members delivering food to survivors (Photo: U.S. Army).



# FEMA

NC Division of Environmental Quality/ Division of Water Resources has coordinated with the **Environmental Protection Agency Region 4** to station a mobile lab to test drinking water at AB Tech Community College, 20 Canoe Lane, Woodfin, NC 28804. The lab will be available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., seven days a week until Oct. 19.

## Apply for FEMA Assistance: Online is the Fastest Option

Homeowners and renters in [27 North Carolina counties and tribal members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians](#) can apply for federal assistance in several ways:

- The fastest options are to go online to [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov) or
- Use the [FEMA App](#).
- You may also call **800-621-3362** any day of the week. If you use a relay service, such as Video Relay Service (VRS), captioned telephone or other service, give FEMA your number for that service.

Additionally, there are **Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) crews** currently visiting disaster-affected areas helping individuals apply. **Disaster Recovery Centers** will also be opening soon to offer in-person support to survivors.

For an accessible video on how to apply for assistance, go to [FEMA Accessible: Applying for Individual Assistance - YouTube](#).

After you apply, you will be contacted by a FEMA inspector to schedule an appointment. Be sure to answer the phone. The inspector's phone number may be from out of state or show up on caller ID as "unavailable."

## Even More Resources Available

**Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) benefits** are now available in 25 North Carolina counties as well as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. File an application for Disaster Unemployment Assistance at [des.nc.gov](https://des.nc.gov). If you need help, you may file over the phone by calling the DUA hotline 919-629-3857.

A **toll-free legal aid hotline** is now available for survivors of Tropical Storm Helene in North Carolina. Low-income survivors with disaster-related legal questions may call the disaster legal assistance hotline at 866-219-5262. For more information, visit [www.ncbar.org](https://www.ncbar.org).

## North Carolinians May Be Eligible for Transitional Sheltering in Hotels

North Carolina survivors who cannot return home may be eligible to receive help from FEMA to find a safe and clean place to stay while they make their long-term housing plans. 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.

## FEMA Specialists in North Carolina Communities After Tropical Storm Helene

FEMA Disaster Survivor Assistance crews are in affected North Carolina neighborhoods helping people apply for federal assistance after Tropical Storm Helene. Disaster Survivor Assistance teams wear FEMA attire and have federal photo identification badges. Disaster Survivor Assistance crews never ask for, or accept, money.

## Stop the Spread of Rumors

FEMA is working to stop the spread of dangerous rumors. Be aware and share official information from trusted sources. Learn more and help us amplify: [Hurricane Helene: Rumor Response | FEMA.gov](#). FEMA is also working to cultivate awareness of fraud in North Carolina.

## Be Alert for Fraud After Tropical Storm Helene in North Carolina

North Carolinians should be aware that con artists and criminals may try to obtain money or steal personal information through fraud or identity theft after Tropical Storm Helene. Note that all FEMA employees wear official photo identification badges and will never charge applicants for disaster assistance. If you believe you are the victim of a scam, report it immediately to your local police or sheriff's department or contact the [Office of the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division](#) or FEMA's Hotline.

## Assistance to Meet Your Unique Needs

FEMA offers an upfront, flexible payment to help pay for essential items like food, water and other emergency supplies. There are other forms of assistance that you may qualify to receive once you apply for disaster assistance. You only need to apply with FEMA once.

## What Kind of Help Can FEMA Provide?

FEMA assistance does not replace insurance and cannot restore your home to its pre-disaster condition. FEMA may be able to provide help for uninsured or underinsured costs. File your insurance claim, then apply to FEMA. FEMA's disaster assistance offers [new benefits](#) for survivors that provide flexible funding, a simplified process and expanded eligibility for access to a wider range of assistance and funds for serious needs.

## Questions About Your FEMA Letter

If you applied for federal assistance after Tropical Storm Helene, you will receive an eligibility letter from FEMA in the mail or by email. The letter will explain your application status and how to respond. Read the letter carefully because it will include the amount of any assistance FEMA may provide and information on the appropriate use of disaster assistance funds. If you have questions, or disagree with the initial decision, call FEMA at 800-621-3362 to find out what information FEMA needs.

## Damaged Wells and Septic Systems

For private wells and septic systems, FEMA may reimburse you for the cost of a professional, licensed technician to visit your home and prepare an estimate detailing the necessary repairs or replacement of your disaster-damaged systems. FEMA may also pay for the actual repair or replacement cost of your septic system or well, which typically are not covered by homeowner's insurance. At the time of your home inspection, let the FEMA inspector know you have a private well and/or septic system that may have been damaged by the hurricane.

## Be Safe When Cleaning Up

Follow the direction of local authorities as you clean up. Be aware of safety concerns and separate debris for collection as instructed by local officials. Before cleaning up, make sure to document any property damage with

photos and receipts. Use generators only outdoors and at least 20 feet from windows, doors, and attached garages. Make sure to keep the generator dry and protected from rain or flooding.

## Low-Interest Disaster Loans

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) offers low-interest disaster loans for homeowners, renters, businesses and nonprofit organizations to cover losses not fully compensated by insurance and other sources. Apply online at [SBA.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster). Disaster loan information and application forms can also be obtained by calling the SBA's Customer Service Center at **800-659-2955**.

## Donations and Volunteering

Monetary donations are needed most. Please give to the [North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund](https://www.nc211.org/) to help communities recover from Helene. If you or someone you know would like to volunteer, connect with an accredited organization.

### *Other ways to donate or volunteer:*

- [Volunteer NC Disaster Volunteer Opportunities](#)
- [Feeding Assistance](#)
- [Donate to a VOAD](#)
- [NC 2-1-1 Volunteer List](#)

Do not self-deploy to western North Carolina. Help us keep critical supply lines open.

## Additional Resources

- **Have friends or family who are missing or unaccounted for?** Text **PERSON** to **40403** to add your loved one to search and rescue efforts. Rescue efforts are ongoing and based on the severity of the need. If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.
- **United Way's NC 211** is an information and referral service that connects North Carolinians to verified resources for basic needs, such as housing and utility assistance, food, healthcare, transportation, and more. NC 211 is a multilingual and confidential service that provides health and human services information and referrals through a free statewide phone number (2-1-1 or 1-888-892-1162 if calling from an out-of-state area code) and website ([www.nc211.org](https://www.nc211.org)).
- Red Cross: 800-Red Cross
- Crisis Cleanup: 844-965-1386
- [NC DPS: Emergency Management](#)
- [North Carolina Office of the Governor - NC Gov. Cooper](#)
- [North Carolina State and Local Level Referrals](#)

For the latest information about North Carolina's recovery, visit [fema.gov/disaster/4827](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4827). Follow FEMA on X at [x.com/femaregion4](https://x.com/femaregion4) or on Facebook at [facebook.com/fema](https://facebook.com/fema).