

# North Carolina Tropical Storm Helene Recovery

Oct. 7, 2024

## Key Messages

**Cash is the best donation.** Financial contributions to [recognized disaster relief organizations](#) are the fastest, most flexible and most effective method of donating. When people support voluntary organizations with money, it helps ensure a steady flow of important services to the people in need after a disaster.

**CASH DONATIONS  
are the most  
direct, efficient &  
flexible way to help  
after a disaster**



**Questions about your 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.

## Getting Help to Those Who Need It

FEMA has already paid out more than **\$33 million** in housing and other types of assistance to **27,800 North Carolina households**. With more than **700 FEMA staff** on the ground in North Carolina, and more arriving daily, we are getting help to those who need it most.

There are **1,500 active-duty service members** now in western North Carolina communities to speed the delivery of life-saving resources to residents after Tropical Storm Helene. These teams are conducting critical missions in the hardest impacted areas, including emergency route clearing, emergency debris removal and commodities distribution.

## How to Apply for FEMA Assistance

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:

- Go online to [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://DisasterAssistance.gov),
- Use the [FEMA App](#)
- Or 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.



# FEMA

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

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

Hotel or motel stays paid for by FEMA may be available for North Carolinians displaced by [Tropical Storm Helene](#) in 27 counties and for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. 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.

## 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

**Everyone's journey to recovery is different, so FEMA is here to help with your unique situation.** FEMA offers an upfront, flexible payment of \$750 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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](#) 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](http://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://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).