

North Carolina Helene Recovery

Oct. 14, 2024

The Many Ways to Stay in Touch with FEMA

FEMA remains on the ground in North Carolina to support communities as they get back on their feet. There are over 1,200 FEMA responders deployed supporting the response and recovery operations, including hundreds of Disaster Survivors Assistance staff.

Disaster Survivor Assistance (DSA) Teams are a vital part of the recovery process, they are stationed in community spaces across affected communities helping residents apply for federal assistance and assess other disaster needs.

Four Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs) have opened in Buncombe, McDowell, Caldwell and Jackson counties to help North Carolinians in disaster affected counties. Hours are from 8 a.m. – 7 p.m. Monday through Sunday. More centers will be opening soon. Find a center nearest you at [FEMA.gov/drc](https://www.fema.gov/drc). Survivors can visit any open center, including locations in other states. No appointment is needed.

The **Buncombe County DRC** is located at: A.C. Reynolds High School, 1 Rocket Dr., Asheville, N.C. 28803.

The **McDowell County DRC** is located at: McDowell County Senior Center, 100 Spaulding Rd., Marion, N.C. 28752.

The **Caldwell County DRC** is located at: Caldwell County Health & Human Services Center, 2345 Morganton Blvd SW, Lenoir, N.C. 28645.

The **Jackson County DRC** is located at: Jackson County Annex Building, 198 WBI Dr., Sylva, N.C. 28779.

Don't Wait to Clean Up or Make Repairs

Residents with home damage after Helene do not need to wait for a FEMA home inspection or insurance adjuster before beginning to clean up. Typically, after a survivor applies for disaster assistance, they will be contacted by a FEMA inspector within a few days to schedule an appointment. Before starting any structural work, be sure to get a building permit from your local building authorities.

Before starting clean up, be sure to take photos and videos of damage, including the inside and outside of the building, including personal property, appliances, furniture, etc. Be sure to also save all your repair receipts. After taking photos and videos, immediately throw away flood-damaged items as they could pose a health risk.



FEMA Corps Member listens to a resident at a DRC



FEMA

Water Safety

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) is sharing guidance on actions people can take to ensure water is safe and to prevent waterborne disease or illness after the storm.

It is critical that people do not use contaminated water to drink, wash and prepare food, make ice, prepare baby formula, wash dishes, brush teeth or wash hands. *To learn more about safe water visit* Safe Water (www.ncdhhs.gov/safe-water-simplified/download?attachment).

Ongoing Response

FEMA has approved **\$96 million** in housing and other types of individual assistance for **75,000** households. Additionally, the Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA) program supporting more than **1,900** families. Through TSA, 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.

Thirteen shelters are housing over **500 occupants**. Two mass feeding sites are delivering meals to approximately **45** mobile sites across **13** counties. FEMA has provided more than **7.8 million meals** and **10 million liters of water** to the state, fulfilling all requests from the state for meals and water.

Search and rescue operations are ongoing in western North Carolina.

FEMA continues to coordinate with **North Carolina Department of Transportation** and **Federal Highway Administration** on roadway and bridge assessments and our approach to expedite repairs.

Approximately **96%** of originally reported power outages have been restored, concentrated in western North Carolina. Cellular restoration continues to improve, with **94%** of cellular sites in service as of today.

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 (www.fema.gov/disaster/4827/designated-areas) can apply for federal assistance in several ways: online to DisasterAssistance.gov, via the **FEMA App**, or by calling **800-621-3362**.

If you use a relay service, such as Video Relay Service (VRS), captioned telephone or other service, give FEMA your number for that service. For a video on how to apply for assistance, go to www.youtube.com/watch?v=HhtlyTX49RE.

After you apply, you will be contacted by a FEMA inspector to schedule an appointment. Be sure to answer the phone even if the caller ID as reads as “unavailable.”

After the inspection is completed, you will receive an eligibility letter from FEMA in the mail or by email. Read the letter carefully. If you have questions, or disagree with the initial decision, call FEMA at 800-621-3362 to find out what additional information FEMA needs.

Be Alert for Fraud After Tropical Storm Helene in North Carolina

After disasters, 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 (ncdoj.gov/protecting-consumers) or FEMA's Fraud Hotline 866-720-5721.

Additional Resources

- **Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA)** benefits are now available for designated counties. File an application for DUA at des.nc.gov or over the phone at 919-629-3857. A toll-free legal aid hotline is now available for low-income survivors with disaster-related legal questions at 866-219-5262.
- **Have friends or family who are missing or unaccounted for?** Text **PERSON** to **40403** to add your loved one to search and rescue efforts. If you or someone you know is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.
- **United Way's 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).
- NC DPS: Emergency Management (www.ncdps.gov/our-organization/emergency-management)
- North Carolina Office of the Governor - Gov. Cooper (www.governor.state.nc.us/)
- [North Carolina State and Local Level Referrals](#)
- North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund (<https://www.nc.gov/disaster-relief-fund-faqs>)
- FEMA is working to stop the spread of dangerous rumors. Learn more at: www.fema.gov/disaster/current/hurricane-helene/rumor-response.
- The **United States Postal Service** has established alternate locations. Find a nearby location at www.usps.com.

For the latest information about North Carolina recovery, visit the North Carolina DPS Helene site (www.ncdps.gov/our-organization/emergency-management/hurricane-helene) or [fema.gov/disaster/4827](https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4827). Follow FEMA on X at x.com/femaregion4 or on Facebook at facebook.com/fema.