

# Biden-Harris Administration Provides More than \$408 million to Helene Survivors, Continues to Support Recovery Efforts Across the Southeast in Response to Hurricanes Milton and Helene

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*Administrator Criswell met with local officials today in Florida on Hurricane Milton, and will travel back to North Carolina tonight to aid with ongoing recovery efforts for Hurricane Helene*

*FEMA senior officials remain on the ground and embedded with state and local officials across the Southeast, as recovery efforts are underway*

WASHINGTON – As communities across the Southeast recover from the devastation caused by Hurricanes Milton and Helene, FEMA and the federal family continue to support those affected, work side by side with state and local officials to assist survivors, and coordinate recovery operations.

## Hurricane Milton Recovery Update

While Hurricane Milton has passed, residents in Milton-affected areas should continue following safety guidance from local officials – stay clear of downed power lines and continue to practice power outage and generator safety.

**Debris:** FEMA is currently working with state and local officials on debris removal plans for areas affected by the storms. Residents should pay attention to local guidance related to debris removal in their area.

**Staffing:** More than 600 FEMA staff are on the ground providing support to affected communities. FEMA mobilized search and rescue teams, disaster



response units and vital resources across Florida. Urban Search and Rescue teams conducted more than 530 rescues and assists in collaboration with state and local authorities. Federal teams supplemented the state's critical operations, such as swift water rescues, Emergency Operations Center support, volunteer and donations management and fire/HAZMAT response.

**Sheltering:** Over 100 shelters are currently housing over 13,000 people impacted by Milton, a significant decrease from yesterday.

**Power and Cellular Restoration:** Power restoration efforts have significantly improved across the region following Hurricane Milton, with outages decreasing from a peak of 3.3 million to 2.2 million, as crews work around the clock to bring communities back online.

**Commodities:** FEMA has shipped more than 1.6 million meals and 400,000 liters of water to augment the state's supplies. FEMA has an additional 5.3 million meals and 3.9 million liters of water available to support survivors of Hurricane Milton, ensuring critical supplies are ready for immediate distribution.

## Hurricane Helene Recovery Efforts

FEMA has approved \$408 million in federal disaster assistance for Hurricane Helene survivors and over \$331 million in public assistance.

Hurricane Helene recovery efforts continue, with federal responders working throughout the region to provide immediate and long-term support. Several shelters remain open, providing housing for those displaced by Helene, and FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers are open across the region to provide support.

The agency is actively working alongside state, local and tribal partners to assess damage and support those affected by Helene. Over **9,000** personnel from across the federal workforce, including FEMA staff, are deployed to affected communities. To date, FEMA has delivered over **12.6** million meals and more than **12.7** million liters of water to the region.

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



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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 the FEMA Helpline at 1-800-621-3362.
- Online by visiting [disasterassistance.gov](https://disasterassistance.gov).
- Downloading and applying on the [FEMA App](#).

## Support for North Carolina

**Financial Support:** FEMA has approved **more than \$71.7 million in housing and other types of assistance** for over **52,000 households**.

**Staffing:** As response efforts continue in North Carolina, **more than 1,000 FEMA staff** are on the ground providing support to affected communities. Over **250 Urban Search and Rescue personnel** remain in the field helping people. These teams have **rescued or supported over 3,200 survivors to date**.

**Sheltering:** More than 1,600 families 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. FEMA will notify applicants of their eligibility for this assistance 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. People do not need to make a separate request for this assistance. Shelter numbers continue to decline, with **16 shelters** housing just **under 700 occupants**.



**Power and Cellular Restoration:** More than **95%** of originally reported power outages have been restored. Cellular restoration continues to improve, with more than **87%** of cellular sites in service as of today.

**Commodities:** Commodity distribution, mass feeding, and hydration operations remain in areas of western North Carolina. Voluntary organizations are supporting feeding operations with bulk food and water deliveries coming via truck and aircraft. Mobile feeding operations are helping survivors in heavily affected areas, including mass feeding sites in Buncombe and Watauga counties serving locations across the impacted areas.

## Resources

- There are more than 300 Disaster Survivor Assistance members going into neighborhoods to connect with survivors without cell coverage or power.
- Survivors are encouraged to visit one of the three Disaster Recovery Centers now open, where survivors can speak directly with FEMA and state personnel for assistance with their recovery. To find the nearest center, visit [FEMA.gov/DRC](https://www.fema.gov/DRC).
- Residents can visit: [ncdps.gov/helene](https://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](https://unitedwaync.org)** to add them to search and rescue efforts.

## Support for Florida

As Helene recovery efforts continue in Florida, FEMA has approved more than **\$154.2 million** for over **51,000 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.

There are 92 Disaster Survivor Assistance members going into neighborhoods, and eight Disaster Recovery Centers are open where survivors can speak to state and federal personnel to help with their recovery. Survivors may find their closest center by visiting [FEMA.gov/DRC](https://www.fema.gov/DRC).



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 **\$96 million for more than 121,000** 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.

There are 74 Disaster Survivor Assistance members going into neighborhoods to connect with survivors without cell coverage or power.

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 **\$76 million for more than 92,000 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.

There are 130 Disaster Survivor Assistance members going into neighborhoods and one Disaster Recovery Center open where survivors can speak to state and federal personnel to help with their recovery. Survivors may find their closest center by visiting [FEMA.gov/DRC](https://www.fema.gov/DRC).

## Resources



Residents can find resources like shelters and feeding sites at [gema.georgia.gov/hurricane-helene](https://gema.georgia.gov/hurricane-helene).

## Support for Virginia

To date, FEMA has approved **over \$2.2 million for over 1,000 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.

There are about 35 Disaster Survivor Assistance members going into neighborhoods, and two Disaster Recovery Center open where survivors can speak to state and federal personnel to help with their recovery. Survivors may find their closest center by visiting [FEMA.gov/DRC](https://FEMA.gov/DRC).

Residents can find resources like shelters and feeding sites at: [Recover – Hurricane Helene | VDEM \(vaemergency.gov\)](#)

## Support for Tennessee

FEMA has approved more than **\$7.8 million for disaster assistance for over 1,800 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.

There are more than 39 Disaster Survivor Assistance members going into neighborhoods to connect with survivors without cell coverage or power.

Counties continue to establish 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 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.

FEMA remains steadfast in its mission to support survivors as they begin their recovery from these historic storms. The agency will continue to work with federal, state, and local partners to ensure the safety and well-being of those impacted by Milton and Helene.

