

Mercer County, W.Va., disaster aid hits \$2 million milestone

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CHARLESTON, W.Va. – Six weeks after a major disaster was declared for Mercer County, W.Va., more than \$2 million has been approved for homeowners and renters affected by the Sept. 25-28, 2024, remnants of Tropical Storm Helene.

More than 955 households have registered with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to date. The deadline to apply for disaster assistance is Feb. 7, 2025.

“Getting \$2 million into the hands of the people of Mercer County has been a team effort,” Federal Coordinating Officer Georgeta Dragoiu said. “FEMA continues to work side-by-side with West Virginia and Mercer County emergency management and local officials to coordinate this mission. I also want to thank our state and local nonprofits and our private sector and media partners in getting the word out. We couldn’t have reached this important milestone without them.”

“Recovery is always a team effort, and this milestone reflects the dedication of everyone involved — from FEMA to local officials, nonprofits, and community partners,” West Virginia Emergency Management Division Director GE McCabe said. “We remain committed to supporting the people of Mercer County as they rebuild and recover.”

Disaster assistance may include grants to help homeowners and renters pay for essential home repairs, personal property replacement, and essential disaster-related needs.

In December and January, FEMA deployed Disaster Survivor Assistance teams to visit storm-damaged homes to register people and answer their questions about disaster assistance. The survivor assistance specialists visited more than 2,250 residences, interacting with more than 660 individuals, as well as 66 faith-based organizations and 245 businesses to meet survivors where they are. Housing inspectors have completed more than 640 inspections of disaster-damaged



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properties to verify damage.

FEMA Enhanced Application Services specialists completed more than 470 follow-up calls with survivors, walking them through the application process and collecting information to help complete their requests for federal assistance. Their extra efforts led to more than \$529 thousand to be approved for Mercer County residents' recovery.

Federal disaster assistance is still available to residents of Mercer County. FEMA encourages all survivors who sustained disaster-related damage or losses to apply for assistance at our Disaster Recovery Center (DRC).

The Mercer County Disaster Recovery Center location and hours are as follows:

Princeton Disaster Recovery Center

Lifeline Princeton Church of God

250 Oakvale Road

Princeton, WV 24740

Hours of operation:

Monday to Friday: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Saturdays: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Closed Sundays

The DRC is accessible to all, including survivors with mobility issues, impaired vision, and those who are who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing.

Survivors can also call 800-621-3362. The toll-free telephone line operates from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. daily. If you use a relay service, such as video relay service (VRS),



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captioned telephone service or others, give FEMA your number for that service. They can also go online to [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.fema.gov/disaster-assistance) or download the FEMA app on their smartphone.

Other help remains available to individuals:

- Free disaster legal assistance is available to West Virginia storm survivors. This service offers counseling on insurance claims, landlord-tenant issues, home-repair contracts, the replacement of legal documents destroyed by the storm and other legal matters. Call the legal hotline 866-255-4370.

Disaster assistance grants from FEMA are not taxable income and will not affect eligibility for Social Security (including disability benefits), Medicaid, welfare assistance, food stamps and several other programs. Disaster grants are just that — money that does not have to be paid back to the government.

One of FEMA's federal partners in disaster recovery, the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), offers low-interest disaster loans for businesses of all sizes, homeowners, renters and private non-profit organizations. SBA disaster loans may cover repairs, rebuilding, and the cost of replacing lost or disaster-damaged real estate and personal property.

For more information about SBA loans, call SBA's Disaster Assistance Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955, email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov or visit <http://www.sba.gov/disaster>. Applicants may also apply online via SBA's secure website at <http://www.sba.gov/disaster>. People who are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech disability, should dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services.

For more information on West Virginia's disaster recovery, visit emd.wv.gov, [West Virginia Emergency Management Division Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/WVEMD), www.fema.gov/disaster/4851 and www.facebook.com/FEMA.

