

# As State, Federal Response Efforts Continue, Biden-Harris Administration Provides Over \$10 Million to Hurricane Helene Survivors

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**Release Date: October 2, 2024**

WASHINGTON -- As search and rescue, power restoration and communications capability remain top priorities throughout the Southeast, FEMA has already helped thousands of Hurricane Helene survivors jumpstart their recoveries with more than \$10 million in flexible, upfront funding.

More than 4,800 personnel from across the federal workforce are deployed and more than 1,000 are from FEMA. To date, FEMA has shipped over 8.8 million meals, more than 7.4 million liters of water, 150 generators and more than 225,000 tarps to the region.

Today, President Biden will be in North Carolina and Vice President Harris will be in Georgia meeting with community leaders and first responders. FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell will remain in North Carolina to oversee response efforts and ensure the federal government provides urgent and extensive support to Asheville and surrounding areas.

President Biden has approved a Major Disaster declaration for 24 counties and cities in [Virginia](#). This declaration comes in addition to areas of [Georgia](#), [Florida](#), [North Carolina](#) and [South Carolina](#). Disaster survivors in these areas can begin their recovery process by applying for federal assistance through FEMA.

People with damage to their homes or personal property who live in the designated counties should apply for assistance, which may include upfront funds to help with essential items like food, water, baby formula 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.



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There are three ways apply for FEMA assistance:

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

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 Hurricane Helene.

Voluntary organizations are also providing personnel and resources to the hardest hit areas. The American Red Cross has more than 850 trained disaster workers providing comfort and operating shelters. They are also helping find loved ones through their helpline **1-800-RED-CROSS** (1-800-733-2767) or by visiting the [Red Cross Hurricane Helene Reunification page](#), where you can enter pertinent information about the person you'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.

## North Carolina

President Biden will visit today to survey damage and meet with community leaders and first responders. So far, FEMA has received over 30,000 applications and provided more than \$2.6 million to survivors.

As of today, more than 62% of originally reported power outages have been restored. Nearly 8,000 crews continue to assist with remaining power restoration efforts.

Cellular restoration continues to improve, with less than 50% of cellular sites down as of today. Ten counties, down from 17, have 50% or more cell sites down. Two Federal Communications Commission surveillance teams are conducting



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inspection operations on equipment in targeted counties.

To date, FEMA has helped provide 67 total Starlink to the state, including 3 Starlinks for the Eastern Band of Cherokee Nation and 4 Starlinks for critical lifeline locations as determined by the state.

As of today, search and rescue teams have conducted nearly 1,500 structural evaluations and over 1,660 human and animal interactions including rescues, evacuations and other assistance. Additional federal search and rescue teams are enroute to support the mission.

Voluntary organizations are supporting mass feeding operations with bulk food and water deliveries coming via truck and aircraft delivery.

Four additional shelters opened yesterday, totaling 29 shelters with over 1,000 occupants.

The Salvation Army has provided over 1,000 meals, 1,900 snacks and 1,900 beverages to survivors. Mobile feeding operations continue to help survivors in heavily impacted areas.

The North Carolina National Guard has delivered 12 aircraft pallets, totaling more than 100,000lbs of food and over 38,000lbs of water to Asheville.

Information for Residents:

- Residents should not travel to western North Carolina to keep the roadways clear for search and rescue teams and utility crews.
- 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.

## Florida

Today, 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.



In Florida, FEMA has received over 85,000 applications for assistance and has provided more than \$4.8 million to survivors.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is conducting either debris assessments or water/wastewater assessments across seven counties.

The American Red Cross is conducting direct emergency feeding and working with feeding partners to provide distribution in support of partner production. Sixteen shelters remain open with over 500 occupants.

The Salvation Army has 29 active mobile feeding units serving meals and distributing supplies in nine counties.

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.

## Georgia

Vice President Harris will visit Richmond County today to survey damage and meet with the community. As of today, more than 60% of originally reported power outages have been restored.

In Georgia, FEMA has received over 60,000 applications for assistance. 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.

The Salvation Army has 26 active mobile feeding units providing meals and support to 10 counties in the affected areas.

The American Red Cross is conducting direct emergency feeding and working with feeding partners to provide distribution in support of partner production. One new shelter opened yesterday, totaling 8 shelters with over 500 occupants.

Team Rubicon continues route clearance operations in Ray City.

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



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## South Carolina

Today, Disaster Survivor Assistance teams will begin canvassing impacted communities across the state, meeting survivors where they are, to register for FEMA assistance.

As of today, more than half of originally reported power outages have been restored, including all Trauma 1-level hospitals.

In South Carolina, FEMA has received over 70,000 applications and distributed more than \$4.4 million to survivors.

The state has established a Mass Feeding Task Force to include multiple voluntary agencies. FEMA is supporting the state's feeding mission with Meals Ready to Eat and drinking water.

Information for Residents:

- Residents with questions on Hurricane 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.

## Virginia

Last night, President Biden approved a major disaster declaration for the commonwealth.

Residents in Giles, Grayson, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington and Wythe counties and the independent city of Galax can begin applying for assistance today. Assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster.

Damage assessments are continuing in other areas and more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after the assessments are fully completed.



## Tennessee

In Tennessee, shelter and mass feeding operations are ongoing. The Salvation Army has provided over 250 meals, 60 snacks and more than 180 beverages to survivors.

Eight shelters remain open with decreasing populations, as people are able to safely return home.

Power and cellular restoration continues to improve. Now less than 0.2% of customers are without power and less than 15% of cellular sites are down. As of today, there are no counties with 50% or more cell sites out.

### Information for Residents

- Residents can call **1-800-824-3463 to report a missing person**. Callers should be prepared to relay as much information as possible including names, phone numbers, vehicle identification and last known whereabouts.
- Counties have started establishing donation centers. For the evolving list, visit [TEMA's website](#).

