

FEMA Launches Web Page to Respond to Rumors and Confirm the Facts Related to Hurricane Helene Response and Recovery

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WASHINGTON -- After a disaster, rumors and misunderstandings can spread rapidly through traditional and social media and via word of mouth by friends, neighbors and colleagues. False or misleading information can harm survivors by causing confusion and preventing people from getting the help they need.

FEMA has always used a rumor response page during disasters to get critical information to survivors. To help correct rumors and provide accurate information for Hurricane Helene, FEMA launched a [rumor response page](#) and [Hurricane Helene web page](#) to provide accurate information, keep people aware of rumors and scams and explain the federal disaster assistance programs and processes.

There are ways that you can keep yourself, your family and your community safe after Hurricane Helene:

1. Find trusted sources of information.
2. Share information from trusted sources.
3. Discourage others from sharing information from unverified sources.

Here are some common rumors and facts:

Rumor: FEMA does not have enough money to provide disaster assistance for Helene.

Fact: This is false. FEMA has enough money for immediate response and recovery needs. If you were affected by Helene, do not hesitate to apply for disaster assistance as there is a variety of help available for different needs. FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund has enough funding to support Hurricane Helene efforts and FEMA has what it needs for immediate response and recovery efforts. As FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell has said, she has the full authority to



spend against the President's budget, but we're not out of hurricane season yet so we need to keep a close eye on it.

Rumor: FEMA will ONLY provide \$750 to disaster survivors to support their recovery.

Fact: This is false. This is a type of assistance that you may be approved for soon after you apply, called Serious Needs Assistance. It is an upfront, flexible payment to help cover essential items like food, water, baby formula, breastfeeding supplies, medication and other emergency supplies. There are other forms of assistance that you may qualify for to receive and Serious Needs Assistance is an initial payment you may receive while FEMA assesses your eligibility for additional funds. As your application continues to be reviewed, you may still receive additional forms of assistance for other needs such as support for temporary housing, personal property and home repair costs. If you have questions about your disaster assistance application and what you qualify for, contact us at 1-800-621-3362 to speak with a FEMA representative in your language.

Rumor: FEMA is asking for cash donations and turning away volunteers.

Fact: This is false. FEMA does not ask for or accept any cash donations or volunteers. We encourage people who want to help to volunteer with or donate cash to reputable voluntary or charitable organizations. After a disaster, sending cash to reputable voluntary organizations is often the best way to help as it provides the greatest flexibility for these organizations working on the ground to purchase exactly what is needed. To get in touch with a volunteer organization involved in Hurricane Helene response, visit www.nvoad.org.

If you encounter someone claiming to represent FEMA and asking for donations, be careful as that is likely a scam. Government employees are not authorized to solicit money or donations.

Rumor: Funding for FEMA disaster response was diverted to support international efforts or border-related issues.

Fact: This is false. No money is being diverted from disaster response needs. FEMA's disaster response efforts and individual assistance is funded through the



Disaster Relief Fund, which is a dedicated fund for disaster efforts. Disaster Relief Fund money has not been diverted to other non-disaster related efforts. The funding for communities to support migrants is appropriated by Congress to Customs and Border Patrol – it has nothing to do with FEMA’s Disaster Relief Fund. FEMA’s Disaster Relief Fund has enough funding to support Hurricane Helene efforts and FEMA has what it needs for immediate response and recovery efforts. As FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell has said, she has the full authority to spend against the President’s budget, but we’re not out of hurricane season yet so we need to keep a close eye on it.

Rumor: FEMA is confiscating donations meant for survivors.

Fact: This is false. FEMA does not take donations and/or food from survivors or voluntary organizations. Donations of food, water, or other goods are handled by voluntary agencies who specialize in storing, sorting, cleaning and distributing donated items.

FEMA does not conduct vehicle stops or handle road closures with armed guards -- those are done by local law enforcement.

