

Houses of Worship May be Eligible for FEMA Assistance

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RALEIGH, N.C. - Qualifying private nonprofit houses of worship in North Carolina may be eligible for FEMA grants to cover expenses related to Tropical Storm Helene. Grants through FEMA's Public Assistance program may cover costs to repair or replace facilities damaged during the storm.

FEMA defines religious facilities as a church, synagogue, mosque, temple or any other house of worship, regardless of the religious character of the facility. No religious facility or house of worship may be excluded from this definition because organization leadership or membership are limited to persons who share a religious faith or practice.

Help with repairs and replacement costs may be available to houses of worship in [eligible counties and Tribal Nations](#) in North Carolina. To be an eligible applicant, the house of worship facility must:

- Be owned or operated by a private nonprofit organization;
- Be open to the public;
- Have been damaged by tropical storm Helene;
- Have either not received funding or received insufficient funding after applying for a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster loan to repair or replace a facility; and
- The application must include state and/or U.S. Internal Revenue Service documentation of tax-exempt status, pre-disaster charter and other documentation.

SBA can loan up to \$2 million to qualified houses of worship to repair or replace damaged or destroyed property. SBA can also lend additional funds to help with the cost of improvements to protect, prevent or minimize disaster damage from occurring in the future.



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Religious organizations that provide a “critical service” do not have to go through the SBA process.

Nonprofit organizations that run medical and educational facilities are considered “critical services.” This category of nonprofit can work with FEMA on a potential grant without applying to SBA first. However, this only applies to facilities providing “critical services.” Houses of worship must still apply for an SBA loan for damaged facilities providing “noncritical services.”

The deadline to apply for physical property damage is Nov. 27, 2024. The deadline to submit economic injury applications is June 30, 2025. Applicants may apply online and receive additional disaster assistance information at sba.gov/disaster. Applicants may also call SBA’s Customer Service Center at **(800) 659-2955** or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information on SBA disaster assistance.

All applicants – even if they are waiting for an SBA loan decision – are encouraged to make a Request for Public Assistance (RPA) as soon as possible by contacting their local emergency management office. Some activities regarding emergency work that was performed in preparation or response to the storm may be eligible without an SBA decision or while pending an SBA decision.

Other Resources:

- Video: [FEMA Public Assistance for Houses of Worship](#)
- FEMA Fact Sheet: [Public Assistance: Private Nonprofit Eligibility Factsheet](#)
- FEMA Fact Sheet: [Mitigate Disaster Damage with FEMA Public Assistance](#)

