

Biden-Harris Administration Provides Billions in Federal Assistance for Helene Response and Recovery, Announces Initial Hiring Effort with New Community Liaison Program to Ensure Community-Driven Long-Term Recovery

Release Date: ?? 21, 2024

FEMA to Hire Community Liaisons in North Carolina Assist with Recovery Efforts, Provide Local Jobs to Community

WASHINGTON – The Biden-Harris Administration has provided nearly **\$2 billion** in federal assistance for individuals and communities affected by Hurricane Helene and Milton. FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell today announced that the agency will create a brand-new program and will hire Community Liaisons to assist impacted communities with their recovery and rebuilding efforts. These dedicated Community Liaisons will interface between the people of North Carolina and FEMA to ensure their needs are met and serve as trusted messengers for the community. Administrator Deanne Criswell joined North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper today to provide an update on recovery efforts, as the federal government continues to work alongside it state and local partners to ensure that survivors receive the resources they need to jumpstart their recovery.

“Hurricane Helene was an unprecedented incident that requires an unprecedented response and recovery. I have learned from past recoveries across the nation and know that they work best when the community doesn’t just have a seat at the table, but they have a leading role in the recovery process,” said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. “Today, I am announcing a new commitment – we will be hiring Community Liaisons, who will work alongside us at FEMA to make sure that local voices and local considerations are part of this recovery. They will



FEMA

Page 1 of 3

be embedded in every impacted county, working directly with county administrators, mayors and community leaders. In the weeks and months to come, I anticipate we will hire even more people from the community and we encourage people of the community to apply.”

In response to Helene, FEMA has approved **over \$1.2 billion** in assistance for communities. This includes **\$746 million** in assistance for individuals and families, along with **more than \$524 million** for debris removal and efforts to protect public health and safety. As ongoing response efforts continue in western North Carolina, FEMA has approved **over \$130 million** in housing and other types of assistance for **over 89,500 households**.

FEMA has spent approximately **\$4.3 billion** on Hurricane Helene response and recovery. This number not only includes direct assistance to survivors and communities, but also encompasses broader response and recovery efforts such as mission assignments for Urban Search and Rescue and Army Corps of Engineers for debris removal, as well as Disaster Recovery Center set up and maintenance.

Currently, **FEMA has deployed more than 4,900 personnel** to the affected areas, contributing to a total of **over 7,035 federal responders** who are working together to support state and local governments in their recovery efforts. FEMA personnel on the ground are actively coordinating with local officials, conducting damage assessments, and helping individuals apply for disaster assistance programs. To support response and recovery efforts, FEMA delivered **over 12.6 million meals**, and **13.2 million liters of water** to states impacted by Helene.

More than 8,400 families, effected by Helene, have checked into FEMA provided hotels, allowing them a safe and warm place to stay while they recover. Shelter numbers remain steady, with **11 shelters** housing just over **470 occupants**.

FEMA continues to open Disaster Recovery Centers in affected communities, offering in-person assistance, information on available resources and help with FEMA assistance applications. Disaster Survivor Assistance Teams are also on the ground in all affected states, helping survivors apply for aid and connect with additional resources from state, local, federal, and voluntary agencies.

In North Carolina, there are over **420 Disaster Survivor Assistance members** in communities providing support. There are also **14 Disaster Recovery Centers**



now open in Asheville, Bakersville, Boone, Brevard, Hendersonville, Jefferson, Lenoir, Marion, Sylva and Waynesville 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).



FEMA