

Version 2, Revised November 5, 2024

ASHEVILLE

SMALL BUSINESS
RECOVERY GUIDE 2024



REBUILDING

RECONNECTING

RESTORING

SMALL BUSINESS RECOVERY GUIDE

The information provided in this guide is a compilation of resources and is not an endorsement or recommendation of any agency, service, service provider, or financial institution.

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As we focus on recovering from the impact of Hurricane Helene, our city is committed to helping Asheville's small businesses rebuild and thrive. The Economic Development Coalition, alongside local and state leaders, has been working diligently to ensure that the needs of our small businesses

are met. I have been actively meeting with elected officials and business groups, including recent sessions with business owners in Biltmore Village and the River Arts District, to discuss how best to support our recovery. Each conversation highlights the essential role that our small businesses play—not only in bringing vibrancy to our neighborhoods but in providing jobs and strengthening our local economy.

This **Small Business Recovery Guide** has been developed to support you in reopening and recovering, providing guidance on critical procedures and offering multiple avenues for financial assistance, including grants and loans. This guide is a comprehensive resource designed to help you navigate everything from securing emergency permits to accessing available funding, allowing you to focus on reopening safely and successfully. As available information changes, this guide will be updated and re-released. The City of Asheville's Development Services Department (DSD) has compiled [Tropical Storm Helene Open for Business Guidelines](#) that provides guidance and resources to facilitate a safe return to business operations.

A healthy and thriving economy depends on the resilience and success of our small businesses. The city's recent approval to allocate community and economic development resources for business stabilization is just one example of our commitment to supporting you every step of the way. Please stay connected with us, utilize this guide, and continue to share information with your networks. Each small business that reopens helps Asheville move one step closer to a full recovery, reinforcing our community's strength and unity. Together, we'll create a stronger Asheville—one that reflects the resilience and commitment of its people.

- Mayor Esther Manheimer

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CITY SERVICES

The following are the most current updates on city services that affect small businesses.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

ART bus services have resumed their regular schedules.

- 5:30 AM – 11 PM Mondays – Saturdays
- 8 AM – 6 PM on Sundays and holidays

The N20, 170, and WE1 eastbound routes have been modified. You can find more information on those, and all routes [here](#). You can also register to receive transit alerts by texting NextART to 41411

ART Bus services will remain free until further notice.

Flag stops are no longer available. Please use designated stops along the route to board the bus.

ART Paratransit services are resuming where possible. Paratransit customers should call 828.250.6750 to schedule transportation.

Shuttle service is also available from 8 AM to 4 PM to AC Reynolds from area shelters. One bus will provide transportation to these shelters and the resource center.

SEWERAGE & WATER SYSTEMS

BILLING/PAYMENTS

The City of Asheville is not assessing late fees for water bills, sending delinquent notices, creating new bills, or doing any cuts-offs for non-payment at this time.

Payments are being accepted online, IVR, and by mail for anyone that is trying to pay an existing bill.

Customers can call 828-251-1122 with billing concerns.

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FLUSHING

Water for flushing (non-potable) is available at most water distribution sites (*see the 'Food, Water, Supplies Distribution' section in the Table of Contents*). The Jewish Community Center's Pool (40 Clyde Street) is also a source of water for flushing from 10 AM - 12 PM. Bring containers.

FlushAVL is looking for flush brigade volunteers. Click [here](#) to register and find out more.

FAQs

For frequently asked questions regarding water outages, what to do when water returns, etc., click [here](#).

POTABLE VS NONPOTABLE WATER

Potable water is safe for drinking and non-potable is not.

Potable Water: This is water that is safe to drink and use for food preparation. It meets safety and health standards, typically set by governments or regulatory bodies, and is free from harmful contaminants such as bacteria, viruses, chemicals, and toxins.

Non-Potable Water: This water is not safe for drinking or food preparation due to the presence of contaminants, pollutants, or chemicals. It may be used for purposes such as irrigation, industrial processes, flushing toilets, washing dishes at 170 degrees, laundry or cleaning, but should never be consumed without proper treatment.

SEWERAGE SYSTEM

Buncombe County's sewer system remains operational, but please check the lines on your own property for any damage before using.

The Metropolitan Sewerage District administration building is now open to the public, at 2028 Riverside Dr. in Asheville. You can visit in person, but if you have a sewer emergency you can also call 828-768-0540. Crews are working around the clock to secure the system, but the treatment plant was unaffected except for a temporary loss of power. All 40 pump stations are back online with some running on generator power. Main "interceptor" lines are working. Crews are assessing the other 1,100 miles of smaller lines.

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WATER ADVISORY

Out of an abundance of caution, the unlabeled half-gallon bottles of water from the Tunnel Road and Charlotte Highway distribution sites featuring green lids should be used as non-potable or gray water only. While the water has not been found to be unsafe, there have been reports of discoloration, so water from those bottles should not be consumed. Buncombe County will work with the manufacturer and the appropriate monitoring authorities to ensure the water meets the highest levels of safety. In the meantime, this water should not be consumed. This advisory only applies to the unmarked half-gallon bottles with green lids distributed from the Tunnel Road and Charlotte Highway sites.

WATER SAMPLING

To ensure the safety of customers, Water Resources, with guidance from the EPA and North Carolina DEQ, developed and implemented a [water sampling plan](#) specific to recovering from Helene. Most sample stations are taps going right into the water lines. There are 184 sampling stations throughout the distribution system. Under normal conditions, 8-10 stations per day are tested. However, since Helene, there are 35 stations per day on average. Water Resources' in-house testing is slightly more accurate when the water is clear. As a result, samples are sent to a third-party lab, and the results have a turnaround time of 7-10 days.

Daily testing is done for chlorine, e coli, coliform bacteria, aluminum, iron, and manganese. No testing results have gone over the EPA-regulated number for Secondary Maximum Contaminant Levels.

More information regarding water quality testing post-Helene can be found on the [City's Water Recovery webpage](#).

WATER SYSTEM REPAIRS

Turbidity curtains have been installed at North Fork reservoir, and in-reservoir treatment continues to take place through the end of the day today (Oct. 31). Though the overall turbidity of the reservoir remains high, levels continue to drop. As of Wednesday, the turbidity level at North Fork was 21.2 NTU. In order to be safe for the normal treatment process, turbidity needs to fall somewhere 1.5-2 NTU. The turbidity curtain and treatment operation is intended to speed up the drop in turbidity. Water Resources will work over the weekend to measure the effectiveness of the turbidity curtain operation and will update the public on Monday, November 4.

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Water service has been restored to 99 percent of customers, although a systemwide Boil Water Notice remains in effect. Details and answers to frequently asked questions can be found on the Water Services Recovery page on the City's website.

WELL WATER TESTING

For flooded wells:

- Disinfect the well and have water tested before use
- Boil water for at least one minute if using before testing
- Call 828-250-5016 to have your water tested and for information on how to test your well
- [Tips](#)

Free well testing kits providing a sample container, and information on how to disinfect your well and collect an effective sample can be picked up at the Permits and Inspections Department at the Buncombe County Health Department, 30 Valley St., Monday – Friday from 8 AM – 4 PM. There is a two-day turnaround time for results.

It is important to note that all wells being drilled on properties MUST have a permit. People cannot drill wells without those permits in place. Permits can also be applied for at the Buncombe County Health Department, 30 Valley St.

Please note that when accessing the Buncombe County Health Department building, Valley St. is currently blocked off due to the stationing of potable water tanks. Drivers are asked to use the Charlotte St. entrance and utilize one of the public parking lot spaces. If the parking lot is full, please be patient until a spot becomes available, as many residents are picking up water testing kits, and the parking lot is also being used for volunteers and employees.

WHAT TO DO BEFORE WATER SERVICE RETURNS

- Flip off the breaker to your water heater.
- Turn off water to your water heater.
- Turn off hot water under your sinks.
- Remove aerator (it unscrews) on faucet.
- Turn off the ice maker.
- Turn off water to your whole house filter if you have one.
- Flush your water pipes periodically using the bathtub faucet when water returns.
- Turn off water to toilets when not in use. Turn on water only to flush

The City has made a video with detailed steps that you can view on YouTube by clicking [HERE](#).

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FLUSHING PLUMBING WHEN WATER SERVICE RETURNS

- Flush your home plumbing by running the bathtub's cold water faucet.
- Your water heater may be turned back on once your home's plumbing has been flushed.
- It's safe to flush your toilet after completing steps 1 and 2.

FOR THOSE WITH WATER SERVICE

A Boil Water Notice is in effect for customers with running tap water. Residents will receive daily boil water text notifications that are legally required by the Environmental Protection Agency.

- This water contains sediment but is highly chlorinated to provide as much disinfection as possible.
- Boil water vigorously for at least one minute, even if filtered
- If boiling is not possible, add 8 drops of bleach per 1 gallon of water
- Use bottled water for drinking, cooking, and brushing your teeth
- Use bottled water for infant formula and pets
- Do not use ice made from un-boiled water
- For hand washing, use boiled or bottled water (use hand sanitizer if neither available)
- Do not use water from connected appliances (e.g., refrigerator water dispensers)
- Turn off ice makers
- Close the valve to the hot water heater to prevent sediment from accumulating, and open the inlet once water is restored
- Pour discolored water through your bathtub

TRASH, RECYCLING, & DEBRIS REMOVAL

BURNING REGULATIONS

Under no circumstances is open burning allowed within Asheville City Limits.

As our region dries out, fire chiefs and the Buncombe County Air Quality Agency have asked community members not to burn outside of city limits without obtaining permission from the county. Please call the Buncombe County Air Quality Agency at 828.250.6777, or email airquality@buncombecounty.org for more information.

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DEBRIS REMOVAL

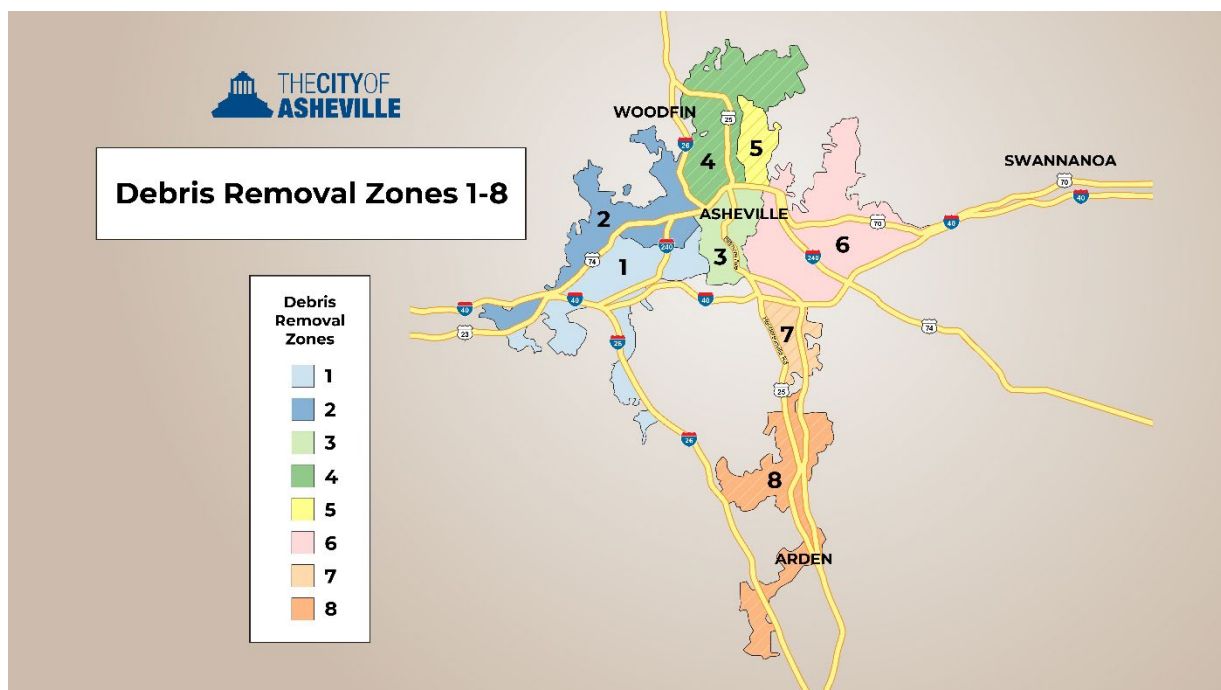
Storm debris removal is critical for community safety and temporary debris sites are necessary to process and ultimately remove debris from our community. There is and continues to be a sense of urgency about debris removal. The longer storm debris remains in our neighborhoods and business areas, the longer we are living with fire and safety hazards. Removing storm debris improves residential and business neighborhood safety. It is also critical to businesses reopening and economic recovery.

FEMA has approved the City of Asheville's request for public assistance to utilize the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACOE) for debris removal and has finalized contract terms with their debris collection contractor, AshBritt.

It is advised that residents and businesses place items for removal into proper categories in the rights of way.

Only Household Hazardous Waste will be picked up for processing. Toxic Hazardous Waste will not.

For more information, visit ashevillenc.gov/Helene/.



Debris removal contractors will use the above zone map. Note that the Zone Numbers do not equate to priority, and the contractor will work in multiple zones each day.

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While the work of the contractor must remain flexible in order to maximize efficiency, the City will work to provide updates as a more regular schedule is operationalized.

Temporary sites are necessary to process and ultimately remove debris from our community. Temporary sites will be diligently monitored for safety and compliance with environmental regulations. The debris removal strategy will continue to be dynamic and we will keep pivoting, when possible, as we are able to secure additional sites. We want to have as few impacts on neighborhoods and business areas as possible.

Safety will remain at the forefront of every decision and we remain committed to outreach and information sharing in residential and business neighborhoods near any temporary site. The activities at temporary sites include: debris staging, grinding, compacting and preparation for hauling to a permanent site outside of the city. **No hazardous materials will be brought to temporary sites.** Temporary sites will receive construction and demolition materials, appliances, electronics, vegetative material and household hazardous waste such as cleaning supplies, paint and batteries. Household hazardous waste will be contained at the sites.

Currently Permitted Sites

- **Hardesty Lane Site** – This site is permitted to receive all forms of debris and waste, including vegetative, construction, and demolition debris as well as appliances, electronics, and household hazardous waste. Household hazardous waste is not the same as toxic hazardous waste, which will not be received to any temporary debris sites.
- **Enka Commerce Park Site** – This site is permitted to receive storm debris. This site is not receiving household hazardous waste materials.
- **65 Ford Street** – moving forward, this site will only be used if needed. With the exception of vegetative debris, storm debris currently on this site will be processed and removed in two weeks. However, security and site prep measures such as fencing and access for heavy machinery will continue so the site is ready to be used, if needed.
- **Front 9 of the Municipal Golf Course** – this site will only be used if needed. However, security and site prep measures such as fencing and access for heavy machinery will continue so the site is ready to be used, if needed. The City of Asheville has opened temporary storm debris management sites to properly dispose of storm debris. Storm debris removal is important for community safety and temporary debris sites

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are necessary to process and ultimately remove debris from our community, which is important for economic recovery and safety.

While it was originally permitted, Roger Farmer Park in West Asheville **will not** be used as a debris site.

These sites will be used exclusively by authorized City contractors and staff to help speed up the cleanup process after the recent storms.

Residents in the areas around sites may notice increased activity, including:

- **Noise** from wood chippers, compactors, and other heavy equipment during daylight hours.
- **Traffic** from heavy-duty trucks traveling to and from the site.

Storm Debris Collection

Do not put limbs, yard debris, construction debris, carpet, concrete, or other bulky or hazardous items in your trash cart. These materials will be collected separately by a contractor.

City of Asheville Sanitation curbside collection customers can go to ashevillenc.gov/AVLcollects or download the **free** app AVL Collects to get alerts about trash and debris collection schedules and work happening in your area.

Residential and Right-of-way Debris Collection in City of Asheville

- City of Asheville right-of-way debris collection has begun in areas with critical infrastructure.
- The community can begin to place sorted debris to the curb in the right-of-way.
- Debris should be SEPARATED at the curb by category:
 - Construction & demolition & bulky items: Building materials, drywall, lumber, carpet, furniture, plumbing.
 - Appliances: Refrigerator, washer/dryer, air conditioner, stove, water heater, dishwasher. Do not leave the doors unsealed or unsecured. Place refrigerators with door facing ground to prevent door opening.
 - Electronics: TV, computer, stereo, phone, DVD players
 - Vegetative Debris: Tree branches, leaves, logs, plants, stumps, trees.

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- Household Hazardous Waste: Oil, batteries, pesticides, paint, cleaning supplies. Ensure all material is contained/closed and will not spill.
- Mud/dirt: See Mud & Sediment Removal Guidance below

[Debris should be separated at the curb according to the images here.](#)



Debris Guidelines

- Storm debris does not need to be bagged and can be placed in a pile.
- Do not block the roadway with debris and ensure access for large trucks and emergency vehicles.
- Do not place or lean debris near or on trees, poles, water meters, or other structures. This includes fire hydrants, utility boxes, and curbside trash carts.
- Contractors cannot collect directly from private property. However, if your pile starts at the curb in the right-of-way and stretches into your yard in a continuous manner, their equipment can reach about 18', as long as there are no overhead lines or obstructions.
- Do not attempt the cleanup process without proper protective equipment: long pants, safety glasses, gloves and sturdy shoes are recommended.
- There will be multiple passes and collections – you do not have to have it all out at once.

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- Ensure staff can still access your trash/recycling carts.

Large Commercial & Private Property Debris

The City is working with state and federal agencies to establish a clear plan for removing debris from residential private property (beyond the right-of-way) and commercial private property. If clean up of private property is approved, this will assist residents with removal of large items from their property or businesses with extensive structural damage. Updates on this coming soon. All commercial properties are asked to either move debris to the right-of-way where possible, or if too extensive, leave in place until the City receives a determination about the ability to address debris directly on private property.

Please do not utilize private box cars and/or dumpsters in the right-of-way as they impede emergency service access and infrastructure repair.

Additionally, the future resiliency of our community is partly dependent on our ability to property sort, process, and dispose of debris. The landfill is already at critical capacity. Please allow City and County contractors to collect and dispose of storm debris as they will be able to sort debris; reduce the size of debris via chipping, incineration, or shredding; and ship to a private landfill. This will protect our valuable landfill resource for the future.

Mud and Sediment Removal

(NC DEQ – [Environmental Guidance for Helene-Impacted Areas](#))

Soil should be separated from other debris with the following guidelines:

1. **No signs of Contamination** (discoloration or abnormal odor such as fuel) – Soils and sediments from roadways, parking lots, and other open areas may be stockpiled in an area where they can be recovered and reused for construction or other needs in the recovery effort.
2. **Signs of Contamination** (discoloration or abnormal odor such as fuel) – Soils and sediments from roadways, parking lots, and other open areas should be isolated and stockpiled on a surface, not allowing fluid to pass through, or a tarp and cover where possible.
3. **Removal from inside of Flooded Homes and Garages** – If there is no sign of contamination, follow steps #1 above. If Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) type materials (cleaners, pesticides, etc) spilled into the mud, then it should be collected, dried, and sent to the landfill for disposal.

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4. **Business/Commercial Removal with Contamination** – Should be containerized pending determination of proper disposal in coordination with the Division of Waste Management, Inactive Hazardous Sites Branch. Regional contact is Brett Engard, (828) 767-2424 or brett.engard@deq.nc.gov.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **When and where is the debris contractor operating?** 7 days/week during daylight hours. Information on where the contractor is operating will be available in the near future.
2. **I can't get large items to the curb. What do I do?** The City is currently working with state and federal government agencies to address debris on private property. If collection of debris from private property is approved, property owners will be asked to sign a Right of Entry form with the contractor to allow them to collect on private property. Stay tuned for more information.
3. **Can I bring my debris to dump sites?** No, only contractors are allowed to bring debris to dump sites. This is in order to meet FEMA requirements for funding for these operations.
4. **Are you grinding stumps?** Contractor can collect stumps. We do not have information at this time regarding stump grinding on private property.
5. **What size should the logs be?** Vegetative debris does not need to be cut to any specific size for collection. The contractor can remove large trees, logs, and branches from the right-of-way.
6. **Who should I contact if I have a question or concerns about debris removal or debris processing?** You may contact the One Buncombe call center at 828-250-6100.

LANDFILL

Buncombe County Landfill, 85 Panther Branch Road, Alexander, open from 8 AM – 3 PM.

TRANSFER STATION

Harmony Rd. has reopened.

Please note the transfer station will not accept commercial vehicles, and access roads may be impacted by dirt and silt.

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CONSTRUCTION AND REPAIR

The following list of notices and resources are important to small business owners are you prepare to reconstruct, rehab, or repair your business facilities.

CLEANING

It is crucial to prioritize safety during cleanup efforts. Here are some key protocols to keep in mind:

- **Protect yourself from Mold:** Flooded areas can develop mold quickly. Wear an N95 mask or respirator to avoid inhaling spores and wear protective gloves and goggles while cleaning. Dispose of items that cannot be dried or cleaned thoroughly. If you plan to spend a lot of time removing moldy belongings or doing work like ripping out moldy drywall, wear a half-face or full-face respirator. Basic information on using it is in OSHA's general respiratory protection guidance.
 - Check for loose power lines or gas leaks. Make sure the electricity and gas are turned off. Look for sagging ceilings or floors or other structural problems. Watch out for wet, muddy, or slippery floors.
 - Turn off main electrical power and water systems. Don't use gas appliances until a professional can inspect them.
-
- ✓ Protect yourself and loved ones against hazards. People with breathing problems like asthma or who have weakened immune systems should stay away from moldy sites. Children should not take part in disaster cleanup work.
 - ✓ Make sure to wear long pants, a long sleeve shirt, and puncture-resistant boots. Avoid exposure to contaminated debris and sharp objects.
 - ✓ Put on personal protective equipment (an N-95 respirator at a minimum, goggles, and protective gloves) to protect your eyes, nose, mouth, and skin. PPE helps protect you from exposure to chemicals, cuts, and other hazards during cleaning.
 - ✓ Protect your skin. Wear protective gloves (non-latex, vinyl, nitrile, or rubber). Do not touch mold or moldy items with bare hands.
 - ✓ Protect your eyes. Wear goggles that provide complete eye protection. Choose goggles designed to keep out dust and small particles. Safety glasses or goggles that have open vent holes will not protect you against dust and small particles.
 - ✓ If you handle debris, consider the presence of nails, glass, or other sharp objects. Wear puncture-resistant gloves and boots for added protection.
 - ✓ Remove standing water and wet materials. Use a wet vacuum to remove water from floors, carpets, and hard surfaces. Dry everything as quickly as you can – within 24 to 48 hours if you can.

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- ✓ Open all doors and windows when you are working and leave as many open as is safe when you leave. Open inside doors, especially closets and interior rooms, to let air flow to all areas. Take doors off their hinges if you need to. Open kitchen cabinets and bathroom vanity doors; remove drawers, wipe them clean, and stack them to dry. Open the attic access to let air flow to the attic. Before you open the attic door, make sure nothing will fall on you.
- ✓ When electricity is safe to use, use fans and dehumidifiers to remove moisture. Do not use fans if mold has already started to grow, because the fans may spread the mold.
- ✓ Clean all hard surfaces and items with bleach. Remove all mold you can see. Dry right away.
- ✓ If you use cleaning products, do not mix cleaning products together. DO NOT mix bleach and ammonia because it can create toxic vapors. Use the chemicals in well-ventilated areas and follow the instructions on the label for proper use.
- ✓ Painting or caulking over mold will not prevent mold from growing. Fix the water problem completely and clean up all the mold before you paint or caulk.
- ✓ Take wet items outside. Throw away items that can't be cleaned and dried. Throw away anything that was wet with flood water and can't be cleaned and dried completely within 24 to 48 hours. If possible, wash all wet fabrics in hot water. If you have precious items that you want to preserve, follow these [guidelines from the Smithsonian Institute](#).
- ✓ Remove all drywall and insulation that has been in contact with flood waters.
- ✓ Shower and change your clothes to avoid carrying mold and other hazards back to your current living quarters.

Exposure to mud and mud dust

- [French Broad RiverKeeper](#), a [MountainTrue program](#), has been testing the water and soil in the RAD and other areas that experienced major flooding. They are awaiting the results of those samples.
- NC DEQ has also taken samples and is awaiting results.
- For now, if you must work near flood water or mud, use a mask, gloves, boots, and protective clothing.

[FARMS](#)

Blue Ridge Women in Agriculture is providing volunteer maintenance and cleanup to recover and rebuild farms. Click [here](#) to make an assistance request.

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HIRING TREE COMPANIES AND CONTRACTORS

In the aftermath of the recent hurricane, we understand that many Asheville residents and businesses are eager to begin recovery efforts, particularly when it comes to removing damaged trees and repairing property. However, we urge caution when hiring tree companies and contractors. Unfortunately, disasters like this can attract unlicensed or unethical contractors who may try to take advantage of home/business owners in distress.

To ensure you make informed decisions and protect yourself from scams or unfinished work, please follow these important guidelines:

- Check for Proper Licensing and Insurance
 - Always ask for proof of a contractor's license and liability insurance. This protects you in case of accidents or damage to your property during the work.
 - Verify the contractor's credentials with local or state agencies to ensure they are in good standing.
- Get References and Read Reviews
 - Request references from previous customers. A reputable contractor will gladly provide this information.
 - Research online reviews or ask neighbors for recommendations to ensure the company has a history of completing work to satisfaction.
- Avoid Upfront Payments
 - Be cautious of contractors who demand large upfront payments; never pay more than half.
 - Reputable companies will provide an estimate and schedule payments based on progress.
 - Always get a written contract that outlines the scope of work, the timeline, and a payment schedule.
- Obtain Multiple Estimates
 - Compare at least three estimates to ensure the price is fair and competitive. Avoid the temptation to rush into the first offer, even under pressure.
 - Be wary of unusually low estimates, which could be a sign of poor-quality work or potential scams.
- Verify the Completion of Work
 - Inspect the work before making final payments to ensure it is completed to your satisfaction. If possible, consult an expert or trusted advisor for a second opinion.
- Trust Your Instincts
 - High-pressure tactics, aggressive sales pitches, or offers that sound too good to be true are red flags. Take your time to make a sound decision despite the stress of the situation.

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Remember, the stress and urgency after a disaster can cloud judgment, but taking these steps will help protect your property and your finances. If you have any doubts or need assistance, please reach out to local authorities or trusted professionals for guidance.

PERMITS/REOPENING

DAMAGE ASSESSMENT & EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

City of Asheville - The Development Services Department will be set up to receive and issue permits for structures and buildings that have received storm damage. Permit fees will be waived for removal and repair permits. Emergency permits will be fast tracked.

TS Helene Emergency Permits are available from our website at Develop.Ashevillenc.gov

- Permits are intended to allow immediate removal of storm damage related items and reconstruction to pre-storm conditions.
- Permit fees are waived.
- Permits are issued as quickly as possible but at least within 24 hours

Phase 2 of Building Damage Assessment is complete. Phase 2 gives a more detailed, 360-degree assessment of structures that received storm related damage. The Building Damage Assessment includes the posting of buildings with Green, Yellow and Red paper tags.

- **Green** indicates there was Storm Related Damage to a building and occupancy can be immediately re-established.
- **Yellow** indicates that there are damaged areas of the building that should be avoided but the building is occupiable within the safe parts of the building.
- **Red** indicates that the building is unsafe to occupy but does not indicate a Condemnation or an order of Demolition.

Buildings that did not receive storm related damage did not receive a tag or documentation from Development Services and may operate your business as usual.

The assessment looked at residential and commercial structures and are as follows:

- 908 structures passed inspection and are safe to occupy
- 409 structures have damaged areas of the building that should be avoided but the building is occupiable within the safe parts of the building.
- And 182 structures are unsafe to occupy

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Community members are reminded to apply for a permit at [Develop.Ashevillenc.gov](https://develop.ashevillenc.gov) before you begin construction work. Electronic applications can be submitted to: develop.ashevillenc.gov

Please contact Development Services with any questions on TS Helene Emergency Permits:

- Website: [Develop.Ashevillenc.gov](https://develop.ashevillenc.gov) (FAQs are on this page)
- Via email: PAC@ashevillenc.gov
- By phone: 828-259-5846

Buncombe County Permits and Inspections employees have been carrying out inspections and assessments of damaged properties and are now using a color-coded placard system to alert residents of building conditions.

- Yellow: Restricted Use
- Red/Pink: Unsafe

All storm damage permits are currently free of charge to ensure the use of licensed contractors.

All repairs costing \$40k or more must be carried out by North Carolina licensed contractors.

For information on permits, contact 828.250.5360 or visit buncombecounty.org/permits.

If your property is within the Special Flood Hazard Area, additional permitting may be necessary. Contact the Flood Plain Administration for confirmation by calling 828.250.4830.

- **Buncombe County Establishment Permits**

- Find more information about what is required for a Buncombe County Establishment Permit by reviewing the [Open for Business Guidelines](#) provided by the City of Asheville, or by contacting [Buncombe County Health and Human Services](#) at 828-250-5016, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- The latest updates from Buncombe County for food service providers can be found [here](#).

CERTIFICATES OF APPROPRIATENESS (CA) are required for most storm-related repairs to historic properties located in Biltmore Village, Montford, St. Dunstan's, and Albemarle Park, as well as city and county landmarks. [Find more information here](#).

- CAs are for compliance with historic district/landmark standards only; they do not cover any other additional permits that may be required.

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- If you aren't sure if you should apply for a CA, please contact staff. Staff is also available if you need assistance with a site visit, resources for restoration contractors and any other related questions.
 - Alex Cole: acole@ashevillenc.gov or 828-259-5638
 - Madelyn Stone: mstone@ashevillne.gov or 828-251-4052
 - Planner of the Day: pod@ashevillnc.gov or 828-259-5450

REOPENING BUSINESS WITHOUT RUNNING WATER

1. Ensure the building is safe to occupy.
 - Buildings with structural and/or water damage should not be occupied until they are permitted for safe occupancy. Visit the [Development Portal](#) for emergency permitting information.
 - If your building has not sustained damage, follow “**Do’s and Don’ts for Safely Reopening After a Disaster**” guidelines below to self-check your building before reopening.
2. Provide restroom and handwashing facilities.
 - Restroom facilities must be available for on-site staff, along with adjacent handwashing facilities. Portable restrooms are permitted.
 - If on-site dining is permitted, restroom facilities and adjacent hand washing must be available to the public.
3. Provide clean drinking water.
 - Provide clean drinking water for on-site staff and customers, either as bottled water or bulk potable drinking water.
4. Establish a Fire Watch.
 - A Fire Watch is required in order to remain open to the public without operating Fire Sprinklers.
 - Review [this guidance](#) from the Fire Marshals Office and track daily Fire Watch procedures.
5. Establish trash pickup or disposal.
 - Food service permittees should follow guidelines for safe disposal of food waste.

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- City of Asheville trash pickup customers can visit ashevillenc.gov/AVLcollects or download the free app *AVL Collects* (from the Google Play Store or Apple Store) to get alerts about trash and debris collection schedules.
 - **Do not put limbs, yard debris, construction debris, carpet, concrete or other bulky or hazardous items in your trash cart.** These materials will be collected separately by a contractor.
6. Food service permittees must follow additional reopening protocols (see “**Reopening Guidelines for Food Service Businesses**” below). Alcoholic beverage permittees must coordinate with NC Department of Agriculture and NC Alcohol Beverage Control Commission (ABC) about re-opening requirements.

DO’S AND DON’TS FOR SAFELY REOPENING AFTER A DISASTER

A secure environment is essential for our local economy’s recovery and residents’ well-being. Follow these guidelines to ensure a safe reopening after a disaster and minimize risks to your employees and community.

Do

1. Structural Inspections

- Conduct a thorough visual inspection of walls, floors and ceilings for cracks, separation or signs of damage.
- Check for gaps between floors and walls or any dips or rises that may indicate structural instability.
- Inspect the roof for leaks, missing materials or holes.

2. Interior and Exterior Exposures

- Ensure there are no materials in danger of falling from ceilings or walls.
- Check for cracked windows and building materials that could pose a hazard to pedestrians.

3. Protection Equipment and Systems

- Ensure that fire and smoke alarms are cleaned, tested and compatible with other systems.
- Perform a thorough inspection of fire-fighting systems, like sprinklers and chemical equipment.

4. [Fire Watch Procedure](#)

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- Follow [guidance](#) from the Fire Marshal's Office and track daily Fire Watch procedures in buildings without operating Fire Sprinklers.

5. Electrical Safety

- Turn off the main service breaker until power is restored to protect against power surges.
- Inspect wiring, electrical systems and telecommunications equipment to ensure there's no exposure to electricity or risk of shorting out.

6. Mechanical and Ventilation Systems

- Ensure that ventilation systems for gas furnaces and water heaters are clear and operational.
- Test and safely start HVAC systems, blowing cold air first to prevent mold growth.

7. Water Systems

- Turn off the main water valve until water is restored, and open it slowly to prevent surges.
- Check for leaks and purge sediment after water is restored by opening a tub spout or hose bibb.

8. Health and Sanitation

- Inspect and test facility sanitation systems to prevent exposure to toxic agents.
- Discard any unused or expired foodstuffs and ensure kitchen ventilation systems are working properly.

9. Emergency Planning

- Check that emergency evacuation routes in the building are clear.
- Check that fire extinguishers and other fire protection equipment are operational and undamaged.

10. Compliance and Preparedness

- Ensure that businesses meet building codes and safety regulations.
- Update emergency preparedness plans, including evacuation routes and employee training.

11. Community Engagement and Resources

- Do attend workshops and training on safety protocols and disaster resilience.

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- Do consult with local agencies for financial assistance and resources for repairs and safety upgrades.

Don't

1. Structural and Safety Hazards

- Don't ignore signs of damage like cracked walls, separation of floors or leaks in the roof.
- Don't occupy a workspace if there are materials at risk of falling from the ceiling or walls.

2. Protection Equipment

- Don't skip testing and cleaning fire alarms and other safety systems before reopening.

3. Electrical Hazards:

- Don't restore power without first turning off main breakers to prevent damage from electrical surges.
- Don't assume the wiring is safe without a proper inspection, especially after water damage.

4. Mechanical and Water Systems:

- Don't pressurize HVAC systems without inspection, always check for leaks and ensure vents are clear.
- Don't fully turn on the water system without slowly restoring water pressure to prevent damage.

5. Health and Safety:

- Don't neglect sanitation systems. Failure can lead to health risks for employees.
- Don't allow employees to return if emergency routes or fire protection systems are compromised.

6. Cutting Corners:

- Don't rush reopening without ensuring all safety protocols and compliance are in place.
- Don't neglect updating or reviewing your emergency plans and safety training post-disaster.

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REOPENING GUIDELINES FOR FOOD SERVICE BUSINESSES

Food service establishments are regulated by [Buncombe County Environmental Health Services](#).

- Restaurants that did not experience an interruption in water or electricity service should contact Buncombe County Environmental Health Services to confirm.
- Restaurants that experienced an interruption in water or electricity service, but now power and water reinstated, must schedule a visit from Buncombe County Environmental Health Services to reinstate their permit. Appointments are currently offered as same day or next day.
- Restaurants that would like to reopen, but do not have running potable water, must submit an [Emergency Operation Plan \(EOP\)](#) and schedule a visit from Environmental Health Services to reinstate their permit.

The [Asheville Independent Restaurants Association \(AIR\)](#) is providing resources and information to local food establishments about reopening following loss of power and water.

Businesses serving alcohol should coordinate with the NC Department of Agriculture and NC Alcohol Beverage Control Commission (ABC) about re-opening protocols.

Suspension of Operations

In accordance with NC Food Code 8-404.11(A), food service permit holders are required to cease operations and notify the local health department in the event of a flood, extended interruptions of power or water supplies, sewage backup, or other circumstances that may endanger public health.

Food establishments without an approved Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) with permits or transitional permits issued by Buncombe County Health and Human Services must immediately suspend operations in accordance with G.S. 130A-23(d) until utilities are restored and a reinspection is complete or they receive approval of an Emergency Operations Plan.

Minimum Requirements

To reopen, food service businesses must have:

- Free-flowing water for handwashing in bathrooms and kitchen (coolers with spigots are acceptable).
- Restroom facilities for staff with adjacent handwashing stations.
- Public restrooms if on-site dining is offered.

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Emergency Operations Plan

To reopen during utility suspensions or boil water notices:

1. Submit an [Emergency Operations Plan](#) as a .PDF to lilian.asor@dhhs.nc.gov and ehrequest@buncombecounty.org.
2. Name the .PDF file with your establishment's name.
3. Wait for plan approval before resuming operations.
4. Undergo reinspection once services are restored.

Boil Water Advisories vs. Notices

Boil water advisories indicate potential contamination, while *boil water notices* confirm contamination. During *boil water advisories*, food establishments should:

- Utilize bottled water/bulk potable water source or boil water for 1 minute before use and store in clean food safe containers.
- Use single-service articles only or utilize a three compartment sink and mix sanitizer at proper concentration to wash, rinse and sanitize articles using the sink.
- Source pre-washed produce.
- Avoid using ice machines and fountain drink machines. Ice must be obtained from an approved water source, transported and stored to prevent contamination.

Post-Advisory Procedures

After the advisory is lifted:

1. Flush pipes and faucets.
2. Clean and sanitize water-connected equipment.
3. Replace water filter cartridges.
4. Sanitize ice machines.

Fundraising and Donations

Food can be served on a donation basis without an approved Emergency Operation Plan, but tips cannot be solicited. Online fundraisers are permitted alongside food giveaways.

Remember, reopening is optional. Prioritize safety and compliance with health regulations when making your decision.

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REPAIR/REPLACEMENT OF BUILDINGS IN THE FLOODPLAIN

The City is actively assessing the process and regulations that will apply to repair and replacement for any infrastructure and buildings in the floodplain. We appreciate your patience as we navigate these complexities. We will provide more information as soon as it is available.

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FUNDING/ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The following is a list of funding sources for businesses affected by Hurricane Helene and the aftermath of not only damage to structures, but loss of business revenue and impacts to employees.

GRANTS AND OTHER FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Before applying for the below assistance programs, particularly when it comes to federal programs: 1) Document damages (photos, videos, extensive notes, and 3rd party witnesses/verification are best) before cleaning up; and for agriculture/farming grants 2) Contact the local USDA Service Center for guidance on program availability and eligibility. Additional resource information can be found [here](#).

ASHEVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce has set up a **Business Recovery Center** at the Asheville Visitor Center (36 Montford Avenue), open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Walk-ins are welcome, but you can also [make an appointment with a Small Business Administration representative](#). More information about the center can be found on [this flier](#) or at the [Mountain Strong for Business Recovery Webpage here](#). **Interest Form** – As we finalize the application guidelines, please share your contact information so we can keep you updated on the Mountain Strong Fund for Business Recovery.

GRANTS FOR BUSINESSES

Grants for Small Businesses

- Explore Asheville and the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority – Always Asheville Fund - **\$750,000 available, \$5,000 - \$10,000 award** | [Application](#)
- Dogwood Health Trust & Appalachian Community Capital - Western North Carolina Small Business Initiative (WNCsBI) - **grants up to \$25,000** | [Application](#)
- Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County -Brick and Mortar Grants, with a focus on properties roughly 50 years or older, with a special priority placed on helping people stay in their homes, **\$500 - \$5,000** | [Application](#)
- Asheville Chamber of Commerce - Mountain Strong Fund for Business Recovery | [In Development](#)
- The US Chamber of Commerce is providing grants of up to \$5,000 for businesses with 1 – 25 employees. [To apply](#), you must have an EIN, cannot be a previous

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recipient of the US Chamber of Commerce Small Biz Readiness Program, and be able to accept ACH. Funds can be used for the purposes of rent payments, utilities payments, payroll costs, inventory costs, and equipment costs. **Applications are accepted until November 17**, and grant recipients will be notified on December 13.

Grants for Arts & Culture Businesses

- National Independent Venue Foundation - National Independent Venue Relief Fund - **\$25,000 max award** | [Application](#)
- The NC Arts Foundation – NC Arts Disaster Relief Fund | **In Development**

Grants for Nonprofits

- Community Foundation WNC – Emergency and Disaster Response Fund - **\$25,000 - \$50,000 award** | [Application](#)
- Community Foundation WNC – WNC Long Haul Recovery & Resilience Fund | **In Development**
- United Way of North Carolina - NC Disaster Relief Fund - **\$10,000 max award** | [Application](#)
 - The North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund will help provide for immediate unmet needs through reimbursements to nonprofits working with disaster survivors. For immediate, unmet needs, the United Way of North Carolina will provide grants to nonprofits or reimburse nonprofits working in impacted communities. If sufficient donations are collected to support long-term recovery work, the North Carolina Community Foundation's affiliate foundations and statewide grants committee will work to ensure that all donations are distributed to nonprofits that can best serve unmet needs in affected communities.

How to apply:

- Click [here](#) to review frequently asked questions about the North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund. If your organization is eligible, please complete the short application below to request a grant for up to \$10,000. Questions? Contact disasterrelief@unitedwaync.org
- [Apply Here](#)

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GRANTS OR STIPENDS FOR INDIVIDUALS

Grants for Hospitality, Food & Beverage Workers

- NC Restaurant & Lodging Association - NC Hospitality Workers Relief Fund | [Application](#)

Grants for Artists

- Center for Craft - Craft Futures Fund, \$500 max stipend | [Application](#)
- ArtsAVL - Emergency Relief Grant, \$500 max stipend | [Application](#)
- RADA Foundation - River Arts District Hurricane Helene Relief Fund \$300 max stipend | [Application](#)
- Asheville Fringe Festival – Artist Relief Fund, \$250 max stipend | [In Development](#)
- Adolph and Esther Gottlieb Foundation - The Adolph & Esther Gottlieb Emergency Grant - \$15,000 max award | [Application](#)
- The NC Arts Foundation – NC Arts Disaster Relief Fund | [In Development](#)

HOUSES OF WORSHIP

The Stafford Act has been revised to make Houses of Worship eligible to apply for potential funding to help with certain disaster-related costs under FEMA’s Public Assistance grant program. FEMA will provide financial assistance only if the House of Worship is denied an SBA loan, or if the loan authorized is insufficient to cover repair costs. The first step is applying for SBA Disaster Assistance.

INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC ASSISTANCE

Agricultural

Farmers impacted by Helene can receive up to \$3,000 for the Helene Recovery Grant from EmPowering Mountain Food Systems. The Grant covers necessary recovery supplies such as generators, fencing, hoop house repair/replacement, and more.

To be eligible, farms must have sustained damages from Helene, and must be in Buncombe, Burke, Cleveland, Haywood, Jackson, Madison, McDowell, Mitchell, Qualla Boundary, Rutherford, Swain, Watauga, and Yancey. Visit cefs.ncsu.edu to apply online.

Farmers with emergency needs like hay, feed, fencing, animal rescue, should call the Ag Emergency Hotline at 866-645-9403.

If you are experiencing difficult emotions or mental stress, the NC Farm Help Line is available now for you by phone or text at 844-325-3276.

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- [Grants, Services, and Loans for Farms](#)
- [Livestock Assistance](#)
- [Livestock Indemnity Program](#)
- [Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-raised Fish](#)
- [Emergency Conservation Program](#)
- [Tree Assistance Program](#)
- [Emergency Forest Restoration](#)
- [Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance](#)
- [Emergency Farm Loans](#)
- [Center for Environmental Farming Systems](#)
- [WNC Community Immediate Disaster Needs Program](#)
 - Farm businesses with damages directly related to Hurricane Helene are eligible to apply for the WNC Communities' Immediate Disaster Needs grant program. This grant is meant to provide resources quickly for farms with urgent needs that impact the ability to get the farm business back in operation as soon as possible. Go to wnccommunities.org or please email: grants@wnccommunities.org.
- [USDA Farm Service Agency](#)
- FarmAid: 1.800.FARMAID

The NC Department of Agriculture has a hotline that is now active to connect farmers with resources to assist with damage and other agriculture emergencies. Call 866.645.9403 between 8 AM and 5 PM to speak with a live operator,

Artists

- [Rauschenberg Medical Emergencies \(grants up to \\$5,000, deadline Nov 26 at 5:00 PM ET\)](#)
- [Adolph & Esther Gottlieb Foundation \(grants up to \\$15,000, no deadline\)](#)
- [Artists Fellowship](#)
- [Asheville Fringe Artists Relief Fund \(\\$250 micro-grant coming soon\)](#)
- [Authors League Fund](#)
- [American Society of Journalists and Authors \(grants\)](#)
- [Musicians Foundation \(grants\)](#)
- [Sweet Relief Musicians Fund \(grants\)](#)
- [Arts AVL Emergency Relief Grant \(\\$500 relief stipend\)](#)
- [Creative Relief](#)
- [Mountain Area Cultural Resources Emergency Network](#)
- [MusiCares Relief \(grants\)](#)

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Food and Beverage/Hospitality/Travel Industry

- [Giving Kitchen](#)
- [The NC Hospitality Workers Relief Fund](#)
- [Southern Smoke Foundation](#)
- [United Sommeliers Foundation](#)
- [Restaurant Disaster Relief Fund \(\\$10,000 grants\)](#)
- [NC Hospitality Workers Relief Fund \(grants\)](#)
- [Always Asheville Recovery Funds](#)

LOANS FOR BUSINESSES

Business Disaster Loans

- Mountain Bizworks - WNC Strong: Helene Business Recovery Fund Loan Program, Small Business Loans (NC General Assembly passed on 10/24) - **Up to \$100,000 per loan** | [Application](#)

Loans (Other)

- [Physical Damage loan](#)
- [Mitigation Assistance loan](#)
- [Economic Injury Disaster loan](#)
- [Military Reservist loan](#)

ONLINE RETAILERS/E-COMMERCE

Explore Asheville is partnering with community organizations to launch [Love Asheville From Afar](#), an initiative that connects the global community with Asheville area and Buncombe County small businesses and creatives to support regional economic recovery. This website allows users to shop from stores with online retail options, buy gift cards for future use, and directly donate to businesses, artists, and nonprofit organizations. Businesses located in or selling from Buncombe County can participate by completing [this submission form](#).

OTHER RESOURCES

Mountain BizWorks has unveiled a new site, [WNCStrong](#), a collective of partners dedicated to revitalizing the area community by providing essential resources to local businesses affected by Hurricane Helene.

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SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA) DISASTER ASSISTANCE

- Loans available for homeowners, renters, businesses, and nonprofits affected by the disaster
- Types of loans:
 1. Home Disaster Loans
 2. Business Physical Disaster Loans
 3. Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL)
- Apply online: [SBA.gov/disaster](https://www.sba.gov/disaster)
- For more information: Call SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955
- [Small Business Administration \(SBA\) Disaster Assistance](#)

SBA office location:

- Asheville Chamber of Commerce: 36 Montford Avenue
- Hours: Monday-Friday 9 AM - 6 PM, Saturday 9 AM - 3 PM, closed on Sundays

The NC Chamber hosted a webinar: SBA Resources for All Businesses Impacted by Helene. Access the [recording](#) and/or the [slides](#).

TAX RELIEF

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has announced tax relief for certain taxpayers affected by Hurricane Helene. The federal tax relief gives affected taxpayers until May 1, 2025, to file various federal individual and business tax returns and make tax payments.

Affected taxpayers include:

- Individuals who live in North Carolina
- Businesses (including tax-exempt organizations) whose principal place of business is in North Carolina
- Other individuals and businesses whose records are necessary to meet a State tax deadline are located in North Carolina
- Relief workers who are assisting in North Carolina and are affiliated with a recognized government or philanthropic organization
- Any individual visiting North Carolina who was killed or injured as a result of the disaster.

For additional information visit <https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/irs-announces-tax-relief-for-victims-of-hurricane-helene-in-north-carolina-various-deadlines-postponed-to-may-1-2025>

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[Click here for information on IRS extensions.](#)

[Click here for information from the IRS on disaster assistance.](#)

[Federal Tax Relief for Individuals and Businesses](#)

UNEMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

ELIGIBILITY

- People in Buncombe County unemployed as a direct result of Hurricane Helene
- Business owners and self-employed individuals affected by the storm

APPLICATION PROCESS

- 60 days from October 1 to file an application
- Apply online at des.nc.gov
- Deadline: December 2, 2024
- If unable to file online, call DUA Hotline: 919-629-3857
- [NC DES Disaster Unemployment Assistance](#)

DOCUMENTATION

- All required documentation must be submitted within 21 days of application
- DES will work with those who cannot provide all documentation to avoid benefit delays

DISASTER UNEMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Weekly unemployment benefits for workers who live or work in storm-affected areas will increase from a maximum of \$350 per week to \$600 per week up to a maximum of 26 weeks. Call 919.629.3857 (English) or 919.275.5698 (Spanish) for more information.

UNEMPLOYMENT FOR GIG/SELF-EMPLOYED WORKERS

Some workers (i.e. gig workers, self-employed workers, etc.) are being denied regular unemployment benefits, as their pay does not come from a covered employer who pays the unemployment insurance taxes necessary to fund the benefits. However, that denial is the first step in the process of receiving Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA). Workers are more likely to be eligible for DUA, and they can begin receiving that assistance only after

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they've either exhausted or been determined ineligible for state unemployment benefits. Any denial comes with appeal instructions. If these workers are filing due to the declared disaster and indicate it when selecting the reason for unemployment, then they are automatically sent to complete an application for DUA. Resources for workers on this issue can be found below:

[Unemployment Insurance FAQs](#)

[Disaster Unemployment Assistance FAQs](#)

MOUNTAIN AREA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

NCWorks Career Center Services are currently available at 339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140, Asheville, inside the offices of the Land of Sky Regional Council. The NCWorks Mobile Unit will also be on site for the time being. Customers can also access NCWorks services by calling 1-855-NCWorks (1-855-629-6757). For individuals needing assistance with filing an Unemployment Claim or Disaster Related Unemployment Assistance claim 1-888-737-0259. For employers needing assistance related to Disaster Unemployment Assistance, the DES Employer Call Center can be reached at 1-866-278-3822.

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OPERATIONS

2025 PROPERTY REAPPRAISAL

A resolution has been approved to delay the 2025 Property Reappraisal until January 1, 2026. At this time, it is unknown how market values will be impacted by the severity of damage. The property assessment team is in the data and analysis phase and will be spending the remainder of the year ensuring properties are assessed as accurately and as equitably as possible.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLANS

Restaurants impacted by Hurricane Helene can apply to operate under Emergency Operations Plans. Read the [press release](#) and view the [newly-released guide](#) from NCDHHS. Email info@ncrla.org with any questions.

Buncombe County

In an effort to get food services establishments up and running safely and quickly, the Buncombe County Environmental Health Department has launched a new Emergency Operations Plan for Food Establishments form. It can be obtained, completed, and submitted at buncombecounty.org/eh.

INSURANCE

FLOOD INSURANCE

The [National Flood Insurance Program \(NFIP\)](#) uses maps that are available on the [Flood Risk Information System](#) to support their program. Every community that participates in the National Flood Insurance Program has a floodplain administrator who works with FEMA and other local, state and federal staff to coordinate review of assessed damages, and review of development applications in the flood hazard areas. Flood Hazard areas are illustrated in the maps on the Flood Risk Information System. The City's floodplain administrator within the Public Works Stormwater Division is working with FEMA to better understand any next steps, which may or may not include re-mapping the region's flood hazard areas.

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STATE FARM

In Buncombe County and Asheville, State Farm's Catastrophe Customer Care site is located at the Westgate Shopping Center, 66 Westgate Parkway. Claims personnel are available to assist with policyholder needs from 9 AM – 5 PM.

Customers may initiate the claim process by contacting their State Farm agent by phone or in person. Customers can also report a claim 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, by calling 1-800-SFCLAIM (1-800-732-5246) or online at <https://www.statefarm.com/>.

If you have any questions or concerns about the State Farm storm response effort, please contact the Government Affairs Team at 828-308-2001.

NC DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

- [NC Department of Insurance post-storm guidelines](#)

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

LEGAL AID

Legal Aid of North Carolina stands ready to provide free advice and legal counsel regarding natural disaster needs, including legal representation if necessary, including for civil legal issues involving:

- Filing FEMA claims and appeals (a process which can be overwhelmingly bureaucratic and burdensome)
- Replacement of lost or destroyed legal and government documents, including driver's licenses and identification cards
- Medical and insurance claims
- Home repair contracts
- Utility disputes related to restoration of services
- Consumer protection issues like construction fraud, price-gouging on repairs and identity theft
- Housing issues such as unlawful eviction and foreclosures
- Bankruptcy
- Probate and clearing title for survivors living in generational homes without a clear title
- Family law cases and children in need of services (unfortunately, domestic violence tends to rise following a natural disaster)

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If you need civil legal assistance, please contact Legal Aid of North Carolina via the following toll-free hotline: (866) 219-LANC or (866) 219-5262. The hotline is available from: 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Monday through Friday; and 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. on Monday and Thursdays. Constituents can also apply online at legalaidnc.org/get-help/ between 1:00-4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday.

PISGAH LEGAL SERVICES

Pisgah Legal Services is helping the people of our mountain region recover and rebuild from Hurricane Helene by offering assistance in applying for FEMA aid, emergency SNAP benefits, disaster unemployment, healthcare coverage, and more.

You can [reach out online](#), or call 828.253.0406 or toll-free 1.800.489.6144.

POSTAL AND MAIL SERVICE

USPS anticipates continued improvement of mail delivery operations with local recovery efforts, to include power, connectivity, and roads.

Social Security checks are being routed to all units for delivery and/or are available for customer pick up.

For impacted residents who have relocated due to the storm, please be sure to complete a change of address request at moversguide.usps.com.

For an updated list of UPS site information, click [here](#).

RENTAL PROPERTY

(FEMA) is seeking information from owners of multifamily properties that can be repaired to local, state, and federal standards and be offered as temporary housing to survivors impacted by Tropical Storm Helene. **The deadline for replies to this request for information is November 6, 2024.**

- The properties are to be offered as temporary housing to eligible disaster survivors.
- The properties must be available for a term of no less than 18 months, with the option of lease extension.
- The properties should be complexes that are able to accommodate a considerable number of people in a single location.
- Each property must have been previously used as a multifamily housing complex and contain multiple rental units.

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- The site must be repairable to local, state, and federal regulations within a four-month period and cannot be located in a floodway.
- This is not intended to repair or improve individual units to rehouse existing tenants.

Interested property owners or management companies must provide responses and comments no later than 5 PM EST, November 6, 2024, via email to: fema-mlr_dr4827nc@fema.dhs.gov

The email subject line should read: *RFI#70FBR425-MLR-DR4827NC Response: MLR-DR-4827-NC*

Properties that do not need repair and are in a condition to be rented immediately are also requested. Interested property owners or management companies must provide responses and comments on or before 5 PM, EST, November 6, 2024, via email to: fema-direct_lease_dr4827nc@fema.dhs.gov.

The email subject line should read: *RFI# 70FBR425-DL-DR4827NC*

More information can be found at [SAM.gov](https://sam.gov).

TRAVEL

For current road conditions and closures: <https://drivenc.gov/>

FEMA is working to stop the spread of misinformation. For official information and to report potential scams, visit: [Hurricane Helene: Rumor Response | FEMA.gov](#)

UTILITIES

- [Enbridge Gas](#) (formerly Dominion Energy) – [Responding to Tropical Storm Helene](#)
 - Water
 - Find more in-depth information about water requirements by reviewing the [Open for Business Guidelines](#) provided by the City of Asheville, or by contacting [Buncombe County Health and Human Services](#) at 828-250-5016, Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
 - Power – Duke Energy
 - [Outage map](#)
 - [Ongoing restoration site](#)
-

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WORKSPACES AND BUSINESS SUPPORT

ASHEVILLE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Businesses impacted by Helene are invited to access free resources and recovery workspace at the Asheville Chamber of Commerce's Business Recovery Center, 36 Montford Ave. Open to ALL area businesses. Wi-Fi and portable toilets available.

Partners on-site provide one-on-one support for businesses of all sizes.

- U.S. Small Business Administration: in-person assistance for SBA disaster loan applications
- Mountain BizWorks: Providing info on recovery funds
- SBTDC: Technical support for business recovery planning
- Western Women's Business Center: Business support
- Kudzu Brands: Assisting with marketing and communication needs
- Colton Groome Financial - Assisting with disaster-related retirement plan questions

Schedules vary by partner. Click [here](#) for details.

BUSINESS RECOVERY WORKSPACE

First-come, first-served temporary workspace available at no cost for business owners, nonprofit organizations, and employees displaced due to Helene. Internet access is provided. Bring your own laptop.

Open until December 30, Monday -Friday, 9 AM to 5 PM - space for up to 70 users.

Those wishing to work from the Business Recovery Workspace will be asked to complete intake paperwork, sign in and out each day, and follow "house rules" for maintaining a comfortable, clean, and respectful environment for all users.

More details and intake paperwork are available [here](#). [Resource List](#)

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OTHER RECOVERY RESOURCES

The [Asheville Independent Restaurant Association](#) and [Asheville Downtown Association](#) are hosting regular information sessions to support business recovery efforts.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Vaya 24/7 line: 1-800-849-6127

RHA Health Services: 1-888-573-1006 (available 24/7/365)

National Alliance on Mental Illness North Carolina:

- Call: (919) 788-0801 or 800-451-9682
- Text: 919-999-6527
- Email: helpline@naminc.org

Suicide and Crisis Lifeline:

- Call or text 988
- Website: 988lifeline.org

Disaster Distress Helpline: (English and Spanish)

- Call or text 1-800-985-5990
- For Spanish, press "2"
- For ASL, call or text 1-800-985-5990

East Carolina University Center for Counseling and Student Development:

- For UNCA students
- (252) 328-6661 until Oct. 11

Extreme Weather Survivors:

- Free, three-event webinar series offering support and coping strategies, "Healing After Trauma," beginning on Tuesday, October 29, at 8:00 PM. Register [here](#).

Care Collaborative for Western North Carolina Clinicians:

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- List of over 150 clinicians offering free services:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1XP77E1QEV43vMklyS8fjZ5PnfKR-8Mx4hY50aT417Zk/edit?pli=1&gid=0#gid=0>

Agriculture and Farming Services:

- Rural Advancement Foundation Farmer Crisis Hotline: 866.586.6746
- North Carolina Farmers Hotline: 844.325.3276
- [North Carolina Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance](#)

Buncombe County resources:

- Mental health clinicians deployed for all first responders
- Hope4NC hotline for first responders: 1-855-587-3463
- Mental health counselors staffed at shelters
- All shelters have Naloxone and methadone source
- Opioid treatment programs reopened (can visit any facility)

NEWS AND INFORMATION SOURCES

News briefings:

Buncombe County will hold live briefing calls Mondays through Fridays at 11 AM on the Buncombe County Facebook page. Those briefings will be broadcast on Blue Ridge Public Radio 88.1 FM, and on iHeart radio stations 99.9, 104.3, 105.1, and 570 AM.

Emergency Alerts:

Register to receive emergency texts directly from Buncombe County for breaking health and safety news. Text BCAlert to 99411 to sign up. If text alerts are coming through to devices in Spanish only. Please open the text message in its entirety to see the English language version preceding the Spanish language version.

Updated information:

- City information: <https://www.ashevillenc.gov/> (temporarily modified to make it easier for those with limited service to load the important information listed) The full website can be accessed by going to <https://www.ashevillenc.gov/full-home-page/>.
- County information: <https://www.buncombecounty.org>
- One Buncombe hotline: 828-250-6100 (for reporting storm damage, accessing resources, and storm-related information)
- Both Asheville City and Buncombe County offices are now open.

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One Buncombe Call Center:

The One Buncombe Call Center will begin operations on Wednesday, October 30, from 9 AM to 5 PM. Call 828.250.6100 with any questions relating to Hurricane Helene.

PRICE GOUGING AND SCAM REPORTING

North Carolina Consumer Protection Agency lines are open to report price gouging and other Helene-related concerns. To report, call 1-877-5-NO-SCA.M. (1-877-566-7226).

Victims of scams, wage theft, etc., contact North Carolina Attorney General's Office.

Call (877) 5-NO-SCAM toll-free within North Carolina or file a complaint online. You can also contact the Attorney General's Office for help with a complaint about disaster repair or a contractor. [Learn more](#) about fraud and scams.

QUICK LINKS

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [FEMA disaster assistance](#)
- [FEMA Mobile App](#)
- [NC State Cooperative Extension *Preparing for a Disaster* tip sheet](#)
- [Business Recovery Resources](#)