

INDIVIDUALS & HOUSEHOLDS RECOVERY GUIDE



NOVEMBER 2024

Individuals and Households Recovery Guide

November 2024

In times of crisis and recovery, having clear, accessible, and reliable information is crucial for navigating immediate needs and planning for long-term rebuilding. This *Individuals and Families Recovery Guide* is designed to be your comprehensive toolkit for accessing the resources and support you need as we recover from the impacts of Tropical Storm Helene.

Our goal is to empower you with up-to-date information, step-by-step guidance, and direct connections to organizations and services that can help you overcome challenges and rebuild with resilience. Whether you are seeking emergency assistance, exploring housing options, or planning for the future, this guide offers a clear path forward.

Inside, you will find:

- Details on how to stay informed about ongoing recovery efforts.
- Contacts for local organizations, state agencies, and federal programs offering critical support.
- Resources for immediate needs such as food, housing, and medical care.
- Guidance on long-term recovery, from financial assistance to rebuilding strategies.

Recovery can feel overwhelming, but you are not alone. This guide is here to simplify the process, offering resources that are quick to access and tailored to your needs. Together, as a community, we will rebuild stronger, safer, and more prepared for the future.

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WHERE TO GET ONGOING RECOVERY INFORMATION

The City of Asheville continues to provide updates to the [Tropical Storm Helene recovery resources](#) page on a daily basis.

Public officials will hold news briefings Monday - Friday at 11 a.m. The briefings are streamed live at facebook.com/buncombeGov and broadcast on Blue Ridge Public Radio 88.1 FM. You can also listen on the iHeart radio stations including 99.9, 104.3, 105.1, 105.9, 96.5, 98.1, 105.5 and 97.3 (Spanish) 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.

Sign up for AVL Alerts

We continue to urge community members to [sign up for AVL ALERTS](#), the emergency and non-emergency system City of Asheville will use as one way to inform the community.

Monitor social media channels for updates

Asheville Fire Department Social Media

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AshevilleFD>
- X: <https://twitter.com/AshevilleFD>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/ashevillefd>

City of Asheville Social Media

- Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/CityofAsheville>
- X: <https://twitter.com/CityofAsheville>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/cityofasheville>

Update History

The following is a list of updates from our [Helene news page](#), which has been regularly updated throughout our response.

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[Visit our Helene Response and Recovery Page](#)

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)

Parks:

Asheville City has reopened numerous parks. Officials stress that if a park is listed as closed, everyone should stay away from that location. Though some spaces look safe, there may be broken equipment, sinkholes, displaced wildlife, or other “unseen” dangers. Visit [ashevillenc.gov/parks](https://www.ashevillenc.gov/parks) for the most up-to-date list of open parks and recreation facilities.

CONNECTING WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS

Connecting with local organizations during times of crisis is crucial for several reasons:

- **Immediate Support and Resources:** Local organizations often have access to resources, services, and support systems that can be mobilized quickly.
- **Community Knowledge:** These organizations have a deep understanding of specific needs, vulnerabilities, and strengths.
- **Coordination of Efforts:** Local organizations can help coordinate efforts among various entities, ensuring assistance is delivered efficiently and avoids duplication.
- **Building Trust:** Residents are more likely to trust and engage with organizations that are familiar and embedded in their community.
- **Long-term Recovery:** Local organizations play a vital role in the long-term recovery process, helping communities rebuild and become more resilient to future crises.
- **Advocacy and Representation:** Ensuring community voices are heard in decision-making processes during recovery and future planning.

Local organizations offering assistance to the community include:

[Eblen Charities](#)

[Meals on Wheels](#)

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[Beloved Asheville](#)

[MANNA Food Bank](#)

[ABCCM](#)

[Habitat for Humanity](#)

[Western Carolina Rescue Ministries](#)

[Duke Energy's Share the Light Utility Assistance Fund](#)

[Buncombe Partnership for Children](#)

DIRECTORY

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.

Local Assistance:

ABCCM	828.259.5300
Animal Haven of Asheville	828.299.1635
Asheville Humane Society	828.761.2001
BeLoved Asheville	828.571.0766
Buncombe Partnership for Children	828.285.9333
Eblen Charities	828.255.3066
Habitat for Humanity	828.251.5702
Hands on Asheville-Buncombe	828.255.0696
MANNA Food Bank	828.299.3663
Meals on Wheels	828.253.5286
Pisgah Legal Services	828.253.0406
RiverLink	828.252.8474
Western Carolina Rescue Ministries	828.254.0471

Emergency Services:

Asheville Fire Department	828.250.6650
Asheville Police Department	828.252.1110
Buncombe County Emergency Services	828.250.6650
Buncombe County Sheriff's Department	828.250.4503
West Buncombe Fire Department	828.254.7387

Call 911 if an emergency.

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Federal Agencies/Organizations:

Army Corps of Engineers	202.761.0031
Department of the Interior	202.208.3100
Department of Labor	866.487.2365
Department of Treasury	800.829.4933
FEMA	800.621.3362
Red Cross	202.303.4498
Salvation Army	800.725.2769
Small Business Administration	800.827.5722
USDA	202.720.2791

Local and State Government/Agencies:

Buncombe County Government	828.250.4100
City of Asheville	828.259.5962
North Carolina Department of Commerce	919.814.2100
North Carolina Department of Public Safety	919.825.2500
North Carolina Division of Employment Security	888.737.0259
North Carolina General Assembly	919.733.4111

Utilities:

Asheville Oil	828-274-7978
AT&T	866.634.0812
Capital Center Utilities	828-505-3788
Duke Energy	800.777.9898
Enbridge Gas	877-776-2427
Spectrum	888.369.2408
T-Mobile	800.866.2453
Verizon	800.837.4966
Woodfin Water	828-253-5551

[Additional Links:](#)

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) hotline is now available to survivors of Helene. English: 919-629-3857| Spanish: 919-276-5698. For more information or to register online, visit: <https://www.des.nc.gov>.

United Way's NC 211 is a multilingual, confidential service that provides health and human services information and referrals through a free statewide phone number (2-1-1 or 1-888-892-1162 if calling from an out-of-state area code) and website (www.nc211.org).

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NC Department of Health and Human Services (NC DHHS) shares guidance on ensuring water is safe and preventing waterborne disease or illness: www.ncdhhs.gov/safe-water-simplified/download?attachment.

NC Department of Public Safety (DPS): Emergency Management (www.ncdps.gov/our-organization/emergency-management).

North Carolina Office of the Governor: Gov. Roy Cooper (www.governor.state.nc.us).

North Carolina State and Local Level

Referrals: (www.fema.gov/assistance/individual/disaster-survivors/state-local-referral-lists/north-carolina).

North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund: (<https://www.nc.gov/disaster-relief-fund-faqs>).

INSURANCE

When disaster strikes, reach out to your insurance provider. Make sure to contact them directly via their phone numbers or their website. Gather and necessary documentation, including your policy number and any damage evidence (photos, accounts of losses).

In North Carolina, the Commissioner of Insurance is an elected position.

For questions about your insurance contact North Carolina Department of Insurance at 855.408.1212

State Farm:

State Farm 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/>

PARKING AND PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

On-street parking meters and enforcement will resume, starting on December 2nd, 2024. On December 2, you will have to pay for parking if you park at a metered on-street parking space.

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Parking fees for city-owned and managed garages and ART bus service will continue to be free until the end of the year, with the exception of event parking fees at the Harrah's Cherokee Center garage. Fees will resume on January 2, 2025.

ART (Asheville Redefines Transit):

ART bus services have resumed their regular schedules.

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

You can find more information on all routes [here](#). You can also register to receive transit alerts by texting NextART to 41411.

ART Paratransit customers should call 828.250.6750 to schedule transportation.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Local governments want their communities - and their community members – as safe and in healthy environments, so the [City of Asheville](#) and [Buncombe County](#) should be viewed as reliable support systems in times of crisis and recovery. Other trusted support networks include (but are not limited to) [local print news sources](#), [local public radio stations](#), and [community-centered blogs](#) and social media sites.

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE

United States Postal Service has established alternate locations. Find a nearby location at: about.usps.com/newsroom/service-alerts/residential/welcome.htm

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

During times of crisis, there will be numerous opportunities to lend a hand. What skills, talents, and interests do you have that can best benefit an organization?

Some volunteer organizations to consider are:

[Habitat for Humanity](#)

[Hands on Asheville-Buncombe](#)

[WNC's Online Portal](#)

[Meals on Wheels](#)

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[MANNA Food Bank](#)
[BeLoved Asheville](#)
[RiverLink](#)
[ABCCM](#)

WHO IS MY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVE?

If you are having trouble with insurance claims, collecting unemployment, and assessing other resources provided by the government, it may be time to contact your elected representative for assistance. Oftentimes, legislative assistants can help constituents resolve issues.

You can find out who is your State House Representative by following the [North Carolina General Assembly](#).

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IMMEDIATE NEEDS RECOVERY

FOOD AND WATER DISTRIBUTION AND COMMUNITY CARE STATIONS WILL CLOSE ON DECEMBER 2

The last day the City distribution sites and Community Care Stations will operate will be December 2, this includes direct delivery within City limits. Community Care Stations and water distribution sites will be closed on Thursday for the holiday, but they will reopen on Friday. Important changes coming to both community care stations and water distribution sites, though: **At the end of the day on Dec. 2, all water distribution sites and community care stations in both the City and County will close, with the exception of four community care stations in the most impacted communities:**

- Morgan Hill Baptist Church, 594 Barnardsville Highway
- Bethel United Methodist, 1050 Riceville Road
- Owen Pool, 117 Stone Drive, Swannanoa
- Fairview Ingles at 225 Charlotte Highway by Reynolds High

Community Care Stations and water distribution sites will be closed on Thursday, November 28 for the holiday, but they will reopen on Friday, November 29.

Please see below for City of Asheville and Buncombe County locations and times:

- Sky Lanes Bowling Alley, 1477 Patton Avenue, Asheville - 9a.m. - 7 p.m.
- Black Mountain Ingles, 550 NC-9, Black Mountain, 28711 - 12p.m. - 4p.m.
- Fairview Ingles, 225 Charlotte Highway - 12p.m. - 4p.m.
- Swannanoa Ingles, 2299 US 70, Swannanoa - 7a.m. - 7p.m.
- Linwood Crump Shiloh Community Center, 121 Shiloh Road, Asheville - 9a.m. - 7p.m. (no bulk water for flushing)
- Pack Square Park, 70 Court Plaza - 9a.m. - 7p.m.
- Buncombe County Sports Park, 58 Apac Dr., Candler - 7a.m. - 7p.m.
- 980 Brevard Rd in the At Home store parking lot - 9a.m. - 7p.m.
- 85 Tunnel Rd in the Innsbruck shopping center parking lot - 9a.m. - 7p.m.

Community Care Station locations

- Owen Pool, 117 Stone Dr
- Fairview Ingles, 225 Charlotte Hwy
- At Home Store (Parking Lot), 980 Brevard Rd
- Big Lots/Innsbruck Mall, 85 Tunnel Rd
- Bethel United Methodist, 1050 Riceville Rd
- Swannanoa Ingles, 2319 US Hwy 70

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- Morgan Hill Baptist Church, 594 Barnardsville Hwy
- Buncombe County Sports Park, 58 Apac Dr.

CAROLINA ABORTION FUND (CAF)

- Prioritizing callers from WNC
- May be able to help secure funding to get care elsewhere
- Working on distributing Plan B to WNC
- For funding assistance: <https://www.carolinaabortionfund.org/funding>

DIALYSIS

Mountain Mobility is offering life-sustaining dialysis and chemotherapy transport and assistance for accessible patients in coordination with dialysis and cancer centers. They are also resuming all non-emergency trips.

HOUSING/SHELTERS

Hotels available for eligible survivors. Through Transitional Sheltering Assistance (TSA), FEMA pays directly to participating hotels and motels to cover the cost of room, taxes and non-refundable pet fees to provide short-term accommodations for eligible disaster survivors

TSA in N.C. has been extended until Dec. 12. This will allow households additional time to identify another housing solution or make repairs to their home. FEMA will notify participants three to seven days before their checkout dates after determining if they are able to return to their residences.

For shelters throughout WNC, visit: <https://www.readync.gov/stay-informed/open-shelters>

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Crisis Counseling, Mental Health Resources Available for Helene Survivors

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services' Hope4NC Crisis Counseling Program provides immediate support and crisis counseling services for North Carolinians following Helene. Survivors experiencing stress, emotional fatigue, a mental health crisis or just need someone to talk to, can call the Hope4NC Helpline 24/7 at 1-855-587-3463. Services are provided at no cost and are available to anyone residing within the

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declared 39 North Carolina counties and tribal members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, regardless of their eligibility for FEMA financial assistance.

Additionally, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Disaster Distress Helpline is available anytime to provide support. Survivors and responders feeling overwhelmed can call or text 1-800-985-5990 to receive free, confidential support in any language.

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)

MISSING PERSONS

Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams are continuing their work across Buncombe County.

To report a missing loved one, and you are in the City of Asheville limits, please contact the Asheville Police Department by calling 828.252.1110. If you are outside of the city limits, but within Buncombe Country, please call the Sheriff's department at 828.250.6650.

As always, for urgent and emergency situations, please call 911.

MERCY URGENT CARE

- Hours (8:30 AM - 6:00 PM)
- West Asheville: 1201 Patton Ave
- Weaverville: 61 Weaver Blvd
- Brevard: 22 Trust Lane
- Waynesville: 120 Frazier St
- Foothills: 140 W Mills St

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NOVANT GO-HEALTH URGENT CARE

- 349 New Leicester Highway, 9 AM - 6 PM

OXYGEN REFILLING STATIONS

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------|
| • Palmetto Oxygen LLC | 828-285-0235 |
| • Blue Ridge | 828-232-1110 |
| • AeroFlow | 888-345-1780 |
| • Lincare | 828-255-4545 |
| • Accucare | 828-236-3100 |
| • Bradshaw Oxygen LLC | 888-380-6297 |
| • East Coast Medical Oxygen | 828-252-7770 |

PETS/ANIMALS/LIVESTOCK

Veterinary Services

- Veterinary Emergency Group: 1856 Hendersonville Rd Suite F, Asheville (open 24/7)
- MedVet Asheville: 677 Brevard Road, Asheville (open daily 7 AM - 7 PM)

WNC Regional Livestock Center

- Address: 474 Stock Dr., Canton
- Donated supplies: hay, grain, etc.
- For assistance, text (don't call) 828-216-4496
- Can help with supply delivery and animal evacuation . . .

If anyone has lost a pet, the below social media pages may be able to assist in reunification:

- Buncombe County Pets Lost and Found
- Hurricane Helene Lost and Found Pets
- WNC's Lost and Found Pets
- Asheville Dog Weirdos

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Pet Food, Supplies, & Services

ASPCA Hurricane Relief Hotline: 888.808.0810 (7 AM – 7 PM, 7 days/week). Services offered may include pet/food supplies and animal search and rescue. Residents can also find out information on animal shelters, veterinarian clinics, volunteer opportunities, and how to donate. <https://www.aspca.org/about-us/press-releases/aspca-launches-animal-assistance-hotline-provides-free-pet-food-and-supplies>

PHARMACIES

View open pharmacies:

- <https://www.ncbop.org/emergencyoperatingpharmacieshelene.html>
- Pharmacists can dispense one-time emergency supply (up to 90 days) when unable to contact medical provider
- One-time emergency refill (up to 30 days) of prescribed medication available

PLANNED PARENTHOOD

For reproductive and sexual health care needs, call 1-800-230-PLAN. Current patients can get medication refills by calling 828.252.7928, or accessing Epic (Electronic Health Records) and sending a note through patient portal.

SEWERAGE AND WATER SYSTEMS

Sewerage System

The Metropolitan Sewerage District administration building is 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.

Water System

Boil Water Notice Lifted

The City of Asheville has lifted the Boil Water Notice for all water customers as of 11 a.m. November 18.

Water Resources lab staff finished sampling the distribution system early Sunday afternoon, and results have confirmed that the water supply is free from contaminants.

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Turbidity at North Fork Reservoir measured 14.5 as of its last reading. The private contractor for the Army Corps of Engineers continues constructing its water pre-treatment system as planned. Materials and equipment are arriving daily. Nothing has changed with the timeline for completion, which is late November/early December.

Customers may resume normal usage of the water system. It is no longer necessary to use bottled water for consumption, although water distribution and services provided at Community Care Stations at [listed locations](#) will continue until further notice.

While an increase in demand is expected, Water Resources is asking customers to temporarily avoid large-volume activities like filling bathtubs, watering landscaping, filling swimming pools and taking abnormally long showers. Otherwise, normal usage for consumption (drinking and cooking), hygiene (bathing and handwashing) and dishwashing may resume. Appliances with filters, such as icemakers and water heaters that have been turned off, can be turned back on. Please refer to manufacturer's instructions on restarting those appliances if they have been inactive for an extended period.

Lead Exposure Concerns

The City of Asheville is confident there is no detectable level of lead in its source water. Plumbing in structures built before 1988 have increased potential to be a source of lead exposure if water sits undisturbed in plumbing. For this reason, customers in structures built before 1988 are advised to flush their system for 30 seconds to two minutes before consumption on a daily basis. The City of Asheville has received more than 2,000 requests from customers for kits to test their plumbing for the presence of lead. Participation in the City's [Lead Awareness Program](#) usually receives about 5 requests for test kits per month. The data from this sampling will prove to be invaluable moving forward.

The lifting of the Boil Water Notice is an incredible milestone in storm recovery. It took an extraordinary effort to get to this day and the City of Asheville thanks the community for being patient during this disruption in service. Whether it was temporarily turning off the water supply to water heaters, flushing pipes, or enduring multiple Boil Water Notice AVL Alerts, community participation made a difference in getting the water system back online. The Water Resources team was supported by a number of City departments, partners from other water utilities, FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers, without whom this would not have been possible.

See updates from the City of Asheville on water service at the Buncombe County press briefing on November 18 on [Youtube](#).

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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.

Testing

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](#).

UNEMPLOYMENT

[North Carolina Department of Commerce](#): File for your unemployment benefits.

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The US Department of Labor: Disaster Unemployment Assistance provides financial assistance to individuals whose employment or self-employment has been lost or interrupted as a direct result of a major disaster and who are NOT eligible for regular unemployment benefits.

The North Carolina Division of Employment Security: Make sure you have your employment history and personal identification.

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

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

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.

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.

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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 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](#)

VA HOSPITAL

- 1100 Tunnel Road:
 - Operating 24/7 for emergencies and inpatient services; Limited emergency surgeries available; Routine appointments canceled; Acute needs scheduled

Veterans needing medication: Visit VA pharmacy or call 855.679.0074 and press 1. Any retail pharmacy in the community will provide Veterans with a written prescription or active VA prescription bottle as long as they are not older than 6 months and can receive 30-day supplies.

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FEMA ASSISTANCE

To apply:

- Online: DisasterAssistance.gov
- Mobile: FEMA app
- Phone: 800-621-3362 (FEMA)

For an accessible video on how to apply, visit: [FEMA Accessible: Three Ways to Register for FEMA Disaster Assistance – YouTube](#) (includes sign language for the hearing impaired)

Jan. 7, 2025 is the deadline to apply for FEMA assistance.

DISASTER RECOVERY CENTERS

A Disaster Recovery Center is a one-stop shop where survivors can meet face-to-face with FEMA representatives, apply for FEMA assistance, receive referrals to local assistance in their area, apply with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) for low-interest disaster loans, and more. Find one near you at: FEMA.gov/drc or text “DRC” and a ZIP code to 43362. You can visit any open center, including locations in other states.

Disaster Recovery Centers will be closed Nov. 28–Dec. 1 for Thanksgiving weekend. DRCs in Alleghany, Gaston, Jackson and McDowell counties will permanently close 6 p.m. Nov. 27. Otherwise, **DRCs are open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays and 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturdays.**

Homeowners and renters in [39 North Carolina counties and tribal members of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians](#) can visit any open center, including locations in other states. No appointment is needed. To find those center locations, go to fema.gov/drc or text “DRC” and a ZIP code to 43362.

It is not necessary to go to a center to apply for FEMA assistance. The fastest way to apply is online at DisasterAssistance.gov or via the [FEMA app](#). You may also call 800-621-3362. If you use a relay service, such as video relay, captioned telephone or other service, give FEMA your number for that service.

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DECIPHERING YOUR FEMA LETTER

If you applied for FEMA assistance, you will receive a letter explaining FEMA's decision within 10 days. Read your letter carefully and stay in touch with FEMA. They may need more information to approve your application.

If you are approved, you may get funds by direct deposit, or a U.S. Treasury check based on which payment method you chose in the application. Your first payment may be for essentials, like food and water. You could also receive funds to hire a contractor to provide an estimate for home repairs. Stay in touch with FEMA even if you are approved. If your situation changes, you may be eligible for further disaster assistance.

If you are NOT approved, FEMA may need additional information from you to support your application. This will be explained in your determination letter. Read the letter carefully. The fastest way to submit additional documents is to upload to your disaster assistance account at DisasterAssistance.gov.

Survivors have the right to appeal any FEMA decision or award amount. You can appeal any FEMA decision or award amount by sending documents that show you qualify and need more help. You can upload them to your already created FEMA account, mail them to FEMA at P.O. Box 10055, Hyattsville, MD 20782-8055, or fax them to 1.800.827.8112.

Documents may include receipts, bills, repair estimates, property titles or deeds, any other information that may support the reasons for the appeal

All pages of all documents must include your full name, current phone number and address, disaster number and FEMA application number, and the address of the disaster-damaged home.

If you are unable to appeal a decision yourself, someone may appeal on your behalf. This can be done by sending a written explanation for the appeal that is written by someone other than you. This must include their signature. FEMA will also need your written permission to share information about your application. You can do this by completing an Authorization for the Release of Information Under the Privacy Act form and sending it to FEMA. Call 1.800.621.3362 for more information.

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INSPECTIONS

Below are videos that explain the inspection process. This occurs after someone has registered for assistance with FEMA. They are then contacted by an inspector who will come out and perform an inspection.

- [FEMA Housing Inspector Explains Inspection Process](#)
- [Facts About FEMA Home Inspections](#)

For a comprehensive guide to FEMA, [click here](#).

HOMEOWNERS/RENTERS

After a natural disaster, homeowners and renters have various options for assistance.

FEMA, American Red Cross, and the Salvation Army provide immediate assistance, including food, shelter, and funds to help with recovery.

It's advisable to act quickly after a disaster to ensure you receive assistance, gather necessary documentation, and keep records of all correspondence and expenses related to recovery.

Renters can apply for individual assistance on disasterassistance.gov. Individual assistance doesn't just cover housing repairs, but also gas, food, utility bills, hotel stays and other disaster-associated costs.

Direct Temporary Housing Assistance

FEMA offers several types of housing assistance and temporary shelter solutions for eligible households. Direct Temporary Housing Assistance is approved for 25 counties as an interim solution to permanent housing needs. These temporary housing solutions include travel trailers or manufactured home units, and more will be available soon. These options take time, and individuals will be contacted by FEMA if they are eligible. Learn more about housing assistance options and eligibility by watching this video: [Direct Housing Assistance available in North Carolina for Helene Survivors](#).

FEMA is providing **multiple temporary housing options to meet North Carolinians' individual needs**.

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- More than **5,200 households** are using **Transitional Sheltering Assistance hotels and motels**. The first step to receiving housing assistance is applying with FEMA.
- **27 households** are now in travel trailers or Manufactured Housing Units provided by FEMA Direct Temporary Housing Assistance.

Additional Rental Assistance Partner

The City is working with Eblen Charities to provide [\\$500,000 in City-funded rental assistance](#) to city residents. Eblen has begun expanding their staff and volunteer base to handle the additional volume, and are processing 40-50 applications a day.

Additionally, the City is working with Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church to support their efforts in providing rental assistance to community members. The City plans to provide \$250,000 in city funds to make available for rental assistance for low income families in Asheville. It is anticipated this funding will assist over 110 families and enable them to remain in our community. Residents can apply for assistance by visiting Grace Covenant Presbyterian Church located at 789 Merrimon Avenue between 12 p.m. – 4 p.m. Monday – Sunday.

PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Updated FEMA Programs Better Assist People with Disabilities

FEMA funding is available to eligible survivors with disabilities to make certain accessibility improvements to homes damaged by a declared disaster. Recent updates in FEMA Individual Assistance programs provide disaster support by increasing accessibility and eligibility for affected people, families and communities. To learn more, visit: [People with Disabilities | disasterassistance.gov](https://www.disasterassistance.gov)

PRIVATE ROADS AND BRIDGES ASSISTANCE

FEMA funding may be available to support repairs on private roads and bridges, even if your primary home is not damaged. For more information or to schedule an inspection, call 800-621-FEMA (3362).

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LONG TERM RECOVERY RESOURCES

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Financial assistance is critical in times of emergency, as you need the funds to do what you need to get back up and running effectively and quickly.

Grants

When seeking grants during times of natural disaster, consider the following sources:

- **Federal Government:** Look for programs specifically aimed at disaster recovery and resilience.
- **State and Local Government:** Check the state's emergency management agency or local government websites for disaster assistance programs and grants available for relief and recovery.
- **Nonprofit Organizations:** Many nonprofits and local community foundations provide grants and assistance during disasters.
- **Philanthropic Foundations:** Look for foundations that focus on disaster relief or community resilience.
- **Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFIs):** These organizations often support recovery efforts through grants and low-interest loans to affected communities.
- **Crowdfunding Platforms:** While not traditional grants, platforms like GoFundMe or Kickstarter can help raise funds from the community and beyond for relief efforts.
- **Social Media and Online Networks:** Stay informed about grant opportunities by following relevant organizations and forums on platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.
- **Local Businesses and Chambers of Commerce:** Many businesses may partner with local organizations to provide financial support and might offer their grants or sponsorship for recovery efforts.
- **FEMA Disaster Recovery Centers:** These centers provide information on available resources, including grants, for individuals and organizations affected by disasters.
- **Professional Associations:** Some industry-specific associations may offer grants aimed at helping members recover from disasters.

Some disaster related grants created due to Hurricane Helene include:

[Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project Immediate Needs Grant](#)

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[Rural Advancement Foundation](#)

[FarmAid](#)

[ASAP Connections](#)

[WNC Community Immediate Disaster Needs Program](#)

[Livestock Assistance](#)

[Livestock Indemnity Program](#)

[Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, 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](#)

[Craft Emergency Relief Fund](#)

[Rauschenberg Medical Emergencies](#)

[Rauschenberg Dancer Emergencies](#)

[Adolph & Esther Gottlieb Foundation](#)

[Artists Fellowship](#)

[Asheville Fringe Artists Relief Fund](#)

[Authors League Fund](#)

[American Society of Journalists and Authors](#)

[Musicians Foundation](#)

[Sweet Relief Musicians Fund](#)

[Arts AVL Emergency Relief Grant](#)

[Creative Relief](#)

[Mountain Area Cultural Resources Emergency Network](#)

[NC Arts Disaster Relief Fund](#)

[MusiCares Relief](#)

[Community Foundation of Western North Carolina Emergency Grant](#)

[Eblen Charities](#)

[The NC Hospitality Workers Relief Fund](#)

[Southern Smoke Foundation](#)

[United Sommeliers Foundation](#)

[Restaurant Disaster Relief Fund](#)

[Dogwood Health Trust](#)

[Global Empowerment Mission](#)

Be sure to monitor application deadlines and requirements closely, as many grants have specific eligibility criteria and periods for funding after a disaster occurs.

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Rental Assistance

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Repayment Grace Periods

If you never ask, the answer will always be no, so don't be afraid to ask for assistance, even when it comes to paying your bills and contractual obligations.

- Contact your bank, lender, or bill company and discuss your situation.
- Inquire about options for deferment or forbearance.
- Keep records of all communications for future use.

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

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- 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)

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 legalaiddnc.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.

ROAD CLOSURES AND TRAVEL

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

RUMOR CONTROL/SCAMS

Homeowners and renters in North Carolina who applied for FEMA disaster assistance should be aware that FEMA representatives may call from unfamiliar area codes and phone numbers or show SPAM or no caller ID. It is important to answer the call, but always be alert. FEMA inspectors will never call if you did not submit a FEMA application, and a FEMA inspector will never ask for banking information or make a request for payment.

A scam is circulating regarding federal warrants. Texts or emails are being sent with falsified court and/or arrest reports that contain the names of actual Carolina law enforcement officers. People are then asked to pay a fine for missing jury duty. At no time will arrest or court reports be texted or emailed, as they are only delivered in person. At no time will requests for payment be made via text or email. If you have received one of these messages, please report it to your local law enforcement agency.

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

A list of trusted area sources can be found [here](#).

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>

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

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

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REPAIRING AND REBUILDING

Recovering from a disaster when repairing and rebuilding can be a challenging process, taking both a physical and an emotional toll.

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.

ASSESSING DAMAGE

Begin with a thorough assessment of the damage. Take photos and document everything for insurance claims.

Ensure the area is safe. Turn off utilities if necessary and wear protective gear when entering damaged areas.

Develop a comprehensive plan for repairs and rebuilding. Consider what improvements can be made to enhance resilience against future disasters, such as flood-resistant materials or stronger foundational elements.

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.

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- 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.
- ✓ 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

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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.

HIRE PROFESSIONALS

Protect Yourself When Hiring Contractors

Homeowners are urged to take caution when hiring contractors. Unfortunately, disasters like this can attract unlicensed or unethical contractors who may try to take advantage of homeowners in distress. All repairs costing \$40k or more must be conducted by North Carolina licensed contractors.

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.

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- 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.

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

Check local regulations to ensure any reconstruction complies with building codes, and secure necessary permits before starting work. City of Asheville Emergency Permits are available at develop.ashevillenc.gov, and information on Buncombe County permit requirements can be found at 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.

PRESERVATION

Preserving damaged items after a disaster involves careful assessment and a few key steps. Here are some guidelines that can help you manage the situation:

- **Assess the Damage:** Evaluate which items are salvageable. This includes checking for structural integrity and any potential contamination.
- **Clean Gently:** Use a soft brush, vacuum with a brush attachment, or a damp cloth to remove dirt and debris from the surfaces of your items.
- **Dry Out:** If items are wet, dry them as quickly as possible to prevent mold and mildew. Use fans, and dehumidifiers, or place items in a dry, well-ventilated area.
- **Stabilize Materials:** For books or paper, keep them flat and avoid bending pages. You can use wax paper or parchment to separate pages if they are stuck together.
- **Preservation Solutions:** For metals, consider using a corrosion inhibitor to prevent rust. For textiles, store them in a cool, dark, and dry environment. Use acid-free tissue paper for wrapping delicate items.
- **Prevent Mold:** If humidity is high, continue using dehumidifiers and keep items well-ventilated. Regularly check for signs of mold and act immediately to address it.

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- **Document Everything:** Take photographs of damaged items and make notes. This can be important for insurance claims and future reference.
- **Insurance Claims:** If you have insurance, contact your provider to understand your coverage for damaged items and the process for filing claims.
- **Storage:** Store preserved items in a controlled environment to protect them from further damage. Use appropriate containers or archival-quality storage solutions.

[The Preservation Society of Asheville](#) (828.254.2343) has helpful tips should you need help preserving family treasures, in addition to financial resources and advice for owners of historic buildings, drying out a flooded building, making insurance claims, and making post-disaster repairs.

SET A BUDGET

Outline a budget that includes costs for materials, labor, and any unforeseen expenses.

[Consumer.Gov](#) can help you set up a free monthly budget to help with your planning.

[OnTrack Financial Counseling](#) is a local organization that provides free education, counseling, and support to help people reach their money and housing goals so they can overcome crises, afford basic needs, improve money management skills, and make sound choices rooted in their values.

[Life Works](#) helps families increase their income by supporting them with education/training and helping community members obtain full-time, living-wage work while learning to manage their finances.

Keep track of your progress against your plan and budget, making adjustments as necessary.

TRASH, RECYCLING, AND DEBRIS REMOVAL

Household Trash and Recycling

City of Asheville:

The City has resumed collection of household trash & recycling on a regular schedule. Trash should be placed in the trash container and recycling should be placed in recycling containers. Do not put storm debris in trash bins. Materials not collected: mud, construction debris, concrete, other bulky or hazardous items.

County:

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Wastepro has returned to a regular trash pickup schedule when able.

Existing Waste Pro customers are asked to sign up for service with FCC Environmental to continue household trash and recycling pickup after January 1. Click [here](#) for more information.

Recycling:

Curbside Management is accepting recycling drop-offs at 116 N. Woodfin Avenue from 8 AM - 4 PM, Monday - Friday.

For notifications about trash and recycling pickup:

- Download the AVL Collects app (available on Google Play Store and Apple App Store)

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.

Debris Removal

Before placing storm debris near the curb, residents are asked to sort those materials into the following categories:

- Construction, demolition & bulky items
- Appliances
- Electronics
- Vegetative Debris
- Household Hazardous Waste

Please do not block the roadway with debris or place debris on utilities or meters. Residents do not have to place all storm debris out at once. Contractors will be making multiple passes in each zone.

Community reminder: refrain from illegal dumping

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The City of Asheville urges all community members to refrain from illegal dumping during the ongoing recovery process. Dedicated contractors are actively working to collect all types of storm debris, including:

- Vegetation of any size
- Appliances
- Construction and demolition materials
- Bulky items

Illegal dumping diverts critical resources away from recovery efforts and significantly slows down cleanup progress. Proper disposal of storm debris and waste ensures resources are used efficiently, enabling the community to recover more quickly. If community members witness illegal dumping, please report it immediately through the [Asheville App](#).