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More than $37 Million Distributed for Hurricane Helene Relief and Recovery

(July 17, 2025) The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina (CFWNC) distributed three grants totaling $1,650,000 this week to nonprofits providing hurricane recovery services in Western North Carolina. With these awards, the total amount awarded from the Emergency and Disaster Response Fund (EDRF) since October 7 is $37,278,515.
Grants awarded are:

$50,000 to **First United Methodist Church of Waynesville** for home repair and temporary housing for people whose homes were damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Helene.

$100,000 to **Lake Junaluska Assembly** to replace a debris collection boom damaged by Hurricane Helene with a custom-designed boom at the Richland Creek inlet needed to catch debris in future high-water events.

$1,500,000 to **Southwestern Commission Council of Governments** to support the development of Preliminary Engineering Reports (PERs) for local governments so that they can access funds designated for infrastructure improvements, workforce development, and long-term resilience.

The grant to Southwestern Commission will be used to contract qualified engineering firms to produce PERs, which are required supporting documents for local governments seeking funding through the US Economic Development Administration's (EDA) FY 2025 Disaster Supplemental program. Each PER will evaluate project feasibility, scope, and cost, essential components of a competitive federal application. This technical assistance is critical, as many small and rural governments lack the in-house capacity or financial resources to develop PERs independently.

"With the rollout of federal and state grant programs that require both matching funds and PERS, CFWNC wanted to strategically deploy assets to help our municipal partners apply for and be competitive in accessing funds," said Elizabeth Brazas, CFWNC President. "This grant will help remove the cost barrier of the PER reports and allow for a more rapid response to multiple Hurricane Helene funding opportunities."

If you wish to support aid to those affected by the storm, you can donate to the Fund at www.cfwnc.org. Administrative fees are waived so that every dollar goes directly to assistance.

CFWNC makes grants in 18 Western North Carolina counties including the Qualla Boundary. Bringing people together to address regional issues or crises is a key role of community foundations.

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