

NORTH CAROLINA PRO BONO RESOURCE CENTER

Thank you for expressing interest in keeping up to date with Tropical Storm legal relief efforts. The focus of recovery efforts continue to focus on basic health and human needs. It will take time for individuals seeking legal assistance. However, we want to share some information on legal issues.

Timeline of civil legal issues faced after a natural disaster, broken down into short-term (1-6 weeks), medium-term (1-6 months), and long-term (6 months to years) needs.

SHORT-TERM	MEDIUM-TERM	LONG-TERM
<p>1 TO 6 WEEKS AFTER EVENT</p> <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lease Terminations & Evictions ➤ Utility Shutoffs ➤ Security Deposits ➤ Repair Issues ➤ FEMA Applications ➤ Insurance Claims <p>Document Replacement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Birth Certificates ➤ Driver's Licenses ➤ Social Security Cards ➤ Deeds <p>Income Protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Wage Theft Issues ➤ Unemployment Applications/ Appeals ➤ Public Benefits Applications/ Appeals ➤ U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Loan Applications 	<p>1 TO 6 MONTHS AFTER EVENT</p> <p>Housing & Consumer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ FEMA/SDA Appeals ➤ Landlord-Tenant Issues ➤ FEMA/U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development Rent Subsidy Renewals ➤ Displaced Public Housing Tenant Issues ➤ Foreclosure Prevention ➤ Real Property Title Clearing & Probate ➤ Section 8 Portability ➤ Mobile Home Questions ➤ Repair & Contractor Scams ➤ Insurance Scams & Claim Disputes ➤ Price Gouging <p>Family & Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Access to Public Education While Displaced ➤ Powers of Attorney (for care of a child or senior) ➤ Guardianships & Supportive Decision Making ➤ Emergency Custody Modifications ➤ Parenting Order Modifications (new home/school locations) ➤ Domestic Violence Issues (including protective orders) 	<p>6 MONTHS TO YEARS AFTER EVENT</p> <p>Housing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Foreclosures ➤ Landlord-Tenant Issues ➤ Flood Insurance Disputes ➤ FEMA Recoupments ➤ Other Housing Disputes <p>Consumer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Disaster Tax Relief Applications ➤ Bankruptcies <p>General Civil</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Civil & Disability Rights Cases ➤ Legal Counsel for Community Organizations

Legal updates on Tropical Storm Helene:

Landlord/Tenant:

- [National Low Income Housing Coalition: Combatting Information about Hurricane Helene: Rumors and Corrections \(Oct 7\)](#)
- Legal Resources for those impacted by Helene: <https://www.ncjustice.org/helene/>
- Helen disaster assistance and legal resource library: <https://legalaidnc.org/tropical-storm-helene-disaster-assistance/>

FEMA Assistance (Source: [Legal Aid of NC website](#)):

- FEMA has declared Individual Assistance (IA) for Hurricane Helene for 25 western NC counties and Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians. What does this mean for you? It means that you can apply for disaster assistance from FEMA to help offset your disaster-related expenses.
- The current deadline to apply for FEMA aid is November 27, 2024. We recommend applying as soon as possible to receive prompt assistance with disaster needs.
- As of 9/30/24, residents in the following 25 counties are eligible for FEMA aid:
 - Alexander
 - Alleghany
 - Ashe
 - Avery
 - Buncombe
 - Burke
 - Caldwell
 - Catawba
 - Clay
 - Cleveland
 - Gaston
 - Haywood
 - Henderson
 - Jackson
 - Lincoln
 - Macon
 - Madison
 - McDowell
 - Mitchell
 - Polk
 - Rutherford
 - Transylvania
 - Watauga
 - Wilkes
 - Yancey
- You can apply online at <https://www.disasterassistance.gov/> or by telephone at (800) 621-3362. Otherwise, you can download the FEMA weather app from Google Play Store or the Apple Store and you can apply for assistance on the app and upload receipts. Whichever method you choose, the form has a few questions that are tricky. To avoid delay, please follow the following tips:

- 1. One of the questions that FEMA will ask when you register is “Do You Have Emergency Needs”? This means during your evacuation or since staying at home during the disaster, do you need help with Gas, Medication, Food (meals, water, had no power and everything spoils), Shelter (you are staying with friends, family or in a hotel); Clothing; or Durable Medical Equipment (oxygen, walkers, cane, glasses, all major equipment, etc). If this is true, say “YES” to this question. That will result in your receiving Displacement / Critical Needs Assistance, which is \$750.
- 2. When asked if your home is/was accessible, answer “NO” if there was debris, tree branches, continued flooding, loss of power, damage or destruction that prevented you from staying there after Helene. This question is asking whether you can stay at your home or apartment and will trigger the ability for you to receive assistance to pay for hotels or provide funding to use while you stay with family or friends.
- 3. When asked if utilities are out, say “YES” if you incurred costs due to a utility outage, even if your utilities have since been turned back on. This allows you to receive reimbursement for costs such as generator fuel or motel expenses.
- 4. When asked “Are you willing to relocate” say “YES” if you cannot live in your home due to damage, loss of power, etc. This question means you are willing to stay in a hotel or apartment temporarily, and triggers that funding for you. It is not asking if you are willing to move away from your home permanently.
- 5. If you bought or buy a generator, FEMA will reimburse you up to \$629, but you must submit the receipt. If you bought a chainsaw, FEMA will reimburse you up to \$219. Again, you need to provide the receipt. Save your receipts.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (Source: [Legal Aid of NC website](#)):

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) benefits are available for residents of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians and the following counties:

- Alexander
- Alleghany
- Ashe
- Avery
- Buncombe
- Burke

- Caldwell
- Catawba
- Clay
- Cleveland
- Gaston
- Haywood
- Henderson
- Jackson
- Lincoln
- Macon
- Madison
- McDowell
- Mitchell
- Polk
- Rutherford
- Transylvania
- Watauga
- Wilkes
- Yancey

People in the above-listed counties who are unemployed as a direct result of Hurricane Helene may be eligible for unemployment benefits under the DUA program.

The deadline to apply is December 2, 2024.

DUA is a federal unemployment program that provides temporary payments for people who, as a direct result of Hurricane Helene:

- No longer have the job that provided their primary source of income.
- Are unable to reach their place of unemployment.
- Cannot work because of an injury caused by the storm.
- Were unable to begin employment or self-employment due to the storm.
- Have become the major supplier of household income due to a storm-related death of the previous major supplier of household income.

For more information, go to www.des.nc.gov/dua

SBA Disaster Loans: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance>

[LANC Resource Library](#)

- [Learn more about the Disaster Relief Project](#)
- [Learn more about FEMA](#)
- [Tenant's Rights After a Natural Disaster](#)

- [Avoid Scams and Frauds](#)
- [Learn more about Pet Care during a natural disaster](#)
- [Learn more about Insurance Claims and Appeals](#)
- [helene disaster assistance flyer v4Download](#)