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Hurricane Helene Disaster Recovery Grant Program
Frequently Asked Questions
(For Employers/Worksites)

The North Carolina Department of Commerce, Division of Workforce Solutions has received funding from the US Department of Labor to create a temporary employment program to address damage and other needs as a result of Hurricane Helene. The individuals employed in the program may perform labor/cleanup or humanitarian functions for public, for-profit, or non-profit entities in the counties approved by FEMA for up to one year. These grant funds are administered locally by Workforce Development Boards across the state which have the responsibility of identifying public, for-profit, or non-profit employers who have work that is the result of the disaster and matching them with individuals who are eligible to participate in the program.

Public, private, for-profit, and non-profit entities that are interested in applying to be worksites should contact the Workforce Development Board Director for their respective area (see the list of counties and workforce boards below).

Question: What individuals (workers) are eligible to be employed in this program?

Answer: The workforce boards will provide eligible workers for this project.

1. Individuals who are temporarily or permanently laid off because of the emergency disaster, or;
2. Other eligible dislocated workers as defined in WIOA Section 3(15), or;
3. Long-term unemployed workers
4. Self-employed individuals who became unemployed or significantly underemployed as a result of the disaster or emergency.

Question: What entities may participate as worksites and receive workers through this program?

Answer: Public (federal, state, city, county), for-profit, or non-profit entities may request workers to perform either labor/clean-up or humanitarian work that is a result of Hurricane Helene in the counties declared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). (There are currently 27 counties eligible and that number may be increased.) See below

Question: What is defined as clean-up and humanitarian assistance?

Answer: *Clean-up efforts* include demolition, repair, renovation, and reconstruction of damaged and destroyed structures, facilities, and lands located within the disaster area.

Humanitarian assistance includes the distribution of food, clothing, building supplies, and other assistance to victims of the disaster. Program funds may not be used to cover the actual humanitarian aid itself. Humanitarian assistance also

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includes actions designed to save lives, alleviate suffering, and maintain human dignity in the aftermath of emergencies.

Question: Can work be performed on private property?

Answer: Projects may perform work on private property where the following conditions are met:

1. The work must be intended to remove health and safety hazards to the larger community, or to address or alleviate specific economic or employment-related impacts of the disaster, such as cleanup work needed for disaster-affected employers to resume or continue operations;
2. The activities are necessary to remove health and safety hazards on private lands or around homes and other structures and may only return the land or structure(s) to a safe and habitable level, or operational status, and will not improve the original land or structure(s); and
3. Grant recipients must not use Disaster Recovery DWG funds to cover the cost of materials to do repairs.

Question: What are the responsibilities of the worksite (the organization providing the work)?

Answer: Supervision of work that is the direct result of Hurricane Helene.

Question: How and how much are program participants paid?

Answers: Workers in the program are paid the prevailing wage rate for the particular job that is being performed and are paid by the local Workforce Development Board or their contractor using program funds for that purpose. However, in cases where the Disaster-Relief Employer **does not have** other employees doing the same or similar work and with similar training, experience, and skills, grant recipients must ensure that the wages that they will pay to participants:

- 1) are in line with the industry standard for that type of work in the area where the work is to be performed.
- 2) are at least \$15 per hour.

Question: Does the worksite have to provide Workers' Compensation coverage for the workers?

Answer: No. Workers' Compensation coverage is provided by the workforce boards through the program.

Question: What are the costs of this program to the worksite?

Answer: None. The wages of the workers are provided by funds from the program. The worksite provides supervision of disaster-related work.

Question: Besides wages, are there other things the program can pay for?

Answer: Yes, the program may cover the costs of some limited items that allow the participant to perform the job, i.e., work boots, hand tools, safety glasses, etc.

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Question: How long can the workers participate in the program?

Answer: Workers may be on the job for 12 months or up to 2,080 hours or until the disaster-related work is completed; whichever comes first.

Question: As an eligible employer (public, for-profit, or non-profit entity) with work that is related to the disaster that is in one of the counties declared eligible by FEMA. How does my location become a worksite in the program?

- Answer:**
1. Contact the Workforce Development Board (WDB) Director listed below and indicate that you are interested in being a Hurricane Helene Disaster Grant worksite.
 2. Working with the WDB Director or designee, complete a worksite agreement and a job description for the disaster-related work that is to be performed.
 3. Receive referrals of program participants to be workers at your site.
 4. Provide supervision of disaster-related work.
 5. Complete participant timesheets.
 6. Provide job-related performance feedback to the worker.

Contact Person and Information	Counties declared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
High Country Workforce Development Board Misty Bishop-Price, Director 468 New Market Boulevard Boone, NC 28607 Phone: (828) 265-5434, ext. 119 Email: misty.bishopprice@highcountrywdb.com	<i>Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Mitchell, Watauga, Wilkes, and Yancey Counties</i>
Mountain Area Workforce Development Board Nathan Ramsey, Director 339 New Leicester Highway, Suite 140 Asheville, NC 28806 Phone: (828) 251-7473 Email: nathan@landofsky.org	<i>Buncombe, Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania Counties</i>
Foothills Workforce Development Board Annette Staley, Director 111 W Court Street Rutherfordton, NC 28139 Phone: (828) 351-2369 Email: astaley@foothillsregion.org	<i>Cleveland, McDowell, Polk, and Rutherford Counties</i>
Southwestern Workforce Development Board David Garrett, Director 125 Bonnie Lane Sylva, NC 28779 Phone: (828) 586-1962 Email: david@regiona.org	<i>Cherokee, Clay, Graham, Haywood, Jackson, Macon, and Swain Counties</i>
Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board Charity Patterson-Hamber, Director P.O. Box 9026 Hickory, NC 28603 Phone: (828) 485-4273 Email: charity.pattersonhamber@wpcog.org	<i>Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, and Catawba Counties</i>