

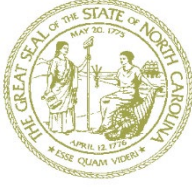


Hurricane Helene Recovery Immediate Needs

Governor Josh Stein's Recommendations

February 3, 2025

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**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR**

February 3, 2025

The North Carolina Senate
The Honorable Phil Berger, President Pro Tempore
The Honorable Sydney Batch, Minority Leader

The North Carolina House of Representatives
The Honorable Destin Hall, Speaker
The Honorable Robert Reives, Minority Leader

Dear Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Leaders, Members of the North Carolina General Assembly and fellow North Carolinians,

Hurricane Helene wrought great devastation across western North Carolina. Over 100 lives were lost, and many more were disrupted. We are facing nearly \$60 billion in damages. Despite a tremendous response from federal, state, local, and private and nonprofit partners in the immediate aftermath, four months later, it is clear that much more is needed to restore and rebuild western North Carolina.

True recovery from a disaster of this magnitude will require a powerful, coordinated, and timely response. We cannot ask the residents who are suffering today to wait until next fiscal year for relief. Their needs are dire and immediate; the state's response should be immediate. The Governor and the General Assembly must work together with a sense of urgency to build western North Carolina back safer and stronger.

The ultimate cost to the state in disaster recovery appropriations will be billions of dollars. Some of those dollars must be spent now. My administration has prioritized a number of items that simply cannot wait until the General Assembly enacts its budget for the next fiscal year. To delay means that many small businesses will close their doors, laying off their workers and that we risk missing an entire construction season, delaying home repairs and reconstruction for an entire year. This is unacceptable.

The plan I have outlined commits \$1.07 billion to address immediate needs through July 1, 2025, supplementing current state appropriations and federal funding. We will submit an additional request for the next fiscal year with items that do not require immediate attention. This proposal focuses on investments that will have the most impact in our disaster-ravaged communities:

Revitalizing our economy: Business recovery grants and awards will bring back jobs and spur economic activity. Many businesses are struggling to keep their doors open and their workers employed this winter, hoping to survive until the summer when business picks back up. This blueprint for recovery will salvage small businesses facing closure, and funding for VisitNC will rejuvenate the critical tourism sector.

Supporting our farmers: Grants to farmers are a necessary part of rebuilding our economy, helping to restore crops, pastures, and agricultural operations of the region.

Rebuilding safe and stable housing: Residents need safe, stable housing to begin recovery. This recommendation provides for home reconstruction, rental and mortgage assistance, housing stabilization, and affordable housing development.

Restoring our infrastructure: We must repair private roads and bridges to restore safe access, as well septic systems and backup power generators. This recommendation also reduces the risk of wildfires by paying to clear debris.

Supporting children and families: Hurricane Helene forced many students to miss a substantial number of school days. This recommendation provides funding for summer school so students who missed at least 15 days of instructional days can catch up on lost instructional time. It also funds food banks and other entities that support children's and families' wellbeing.

President Trump and I met recently during his tour of Hurricane Helene damage in western North Carolina, and I believe the federal government will continue to be a strong partner in disaster recovery. Unfortunately, even if the federal government provides additional recovery dollars, it will take many months until those dollars might flow into western North Carolina and those dollars come with specific strings attached. We cannot remain reactive to temporary solutions and federal program management to drive our response. Rather we must proactively face the challenges confronting the west.

I am grateful for your partnership on a cause that I know unites us all: supporting the people, the economy, and the culture of western North Carolina. Let us be united in our resolve to support those rebuilding a stronger and more resilient western North Carolina and to support them now.

Sincerely,



Josh Stein
Governor

Governor Stein's Helene Immediate Needs Budget Recommendations

Item	FY 2024-25 Amount
Availability	
A1 Transfer from the Stabilization and Inflation Reserve	846,729,750
A2 Appropriate from Helene Disaster Recovery Fund	225,000,000
Total	1,071,729,750
Recommendations	
Strengthening the Economy	
B1 Helene Business Recovery Grants - based on verified sales tax losses, up to \$75K	100,000,000
B2 Expanded Dogwood Health Trust Partnership Grants - businesses w/out taxable sales, up to \$75K	50,000,000
B3 Small Town Business Infrastructure Revitalization Grants	30,000,000
B4 VisitNC Tourism Promotion	15,000,000
B5 Local Government Revenue Replacement Grants	100,000,000
Subtotal	295,000,000
Safe and Warm Places to Live	
C1 Helene Home Reconstruction and Repair Program - startup funds for CDBG-DR compliant program	150,000,000
C2 Affordable Housing - incentivize high-quality, resilient, affordable housing; repair rentals & shelters	50,000,000
C3 Rental, Mortgage, and Utility Assistance	25,000,000
C4 Homeowner and Renter Unmet Needs - immediate minor repairs and non-FEMA eligible needs	25,000,000
C5 Back @ Home for Helene - housing stabilization services and financial assistance for homeless	10,000,000
C6 Disaster Legal Services - \$1.5M in grants each to NC Legal Aid and Pisgah Legal Services	3,000,000
Subtotal	263,000,000
Repairing Infrastructure	
D1 Private Road and Bridge Repairs and Replacement	75,000,000
D2 Local Parks Restoration and Rebuilding Grants - via Parks & Recreations Trust Fund	25,000,000
D3 Flood Abatement and Water Quality Protection Grants - via NC Land & Water Fund	25,000,000
D4 Debris Removal Unmet Needs - address needs while maximizing state and federal programs	12,000,000
D5 Resilience and Backup Power Measures - mobile solar and battery arrays	10,000,000
D6 Septic Repair and Replacement Grants	4,000,000
D7 Recycling Infrastructure and Recycling Business Grants - to assist with post-disaster clean-up	2,000,000
D8 Small and Volunteer Fire Department Grants	1,000,000
D9 Repair and Renovations of Affected State Facilities - incl. state parks, correctional facilities	135,000,000
D10 Continuing Operations and Staffing for State Agencies and UNC	20,000,000
D11 Emergency Management Core Capacity - strengthen disaster financial & communications teams	1,606,250
Subtotal	310,606,250
Supporting Farmers	
E1 Helene Agriculture Disaster Farmer Recovery Grants - scaled based on funding and verified losses	15,000,000
E2 Waterway and Land Rehabilitation - steam debris removal, stabilization, and farm infrastructure repair	100,000,000
E3 Working Farms and Forests Preservation - via Ag. Development & Farmland Preservation Trust Fund	12,500,000
E4 Fire Season Preparation for NC Forest Service - equipment; on-call and overtime pay	16,073,500
E5 Wildfire Risk Reduction - new hand crew units for NC Forest Service	3,350,000
Subtotal	146,923,500
Families and Children	
F1 K-12 Summer Learning Programs - 30 days of summer instruction	34,200,000
F2 Food Bank Grants	20,000,000
F3 Emergency Student Aid Grants - covering tuition, fees, emergency expenses; UNC-A, App State, WCU	2,000,000
Subtotal	56,200,000
Total	1,071,729,750

North Carolina's Helene Recovery Immediate Needs

Availability		FY 2024-25
A1 Transfer from Stabilization and Inflation Reserve		
Utilizes funds from the Stabilization and Inflation Reserve to support Hurricane Helene recovery. Per SL 2022-74, Section 2.2(q), which established the \$1 billion Stabilization and Inflation Reserve, these funds are available to be used for "measures necessary to stabilize the State's economy." Funds from this reserve will be used for business recovery, economic development, and activities necessary to help western NC rebuild after the unprecedented devastation that resulted from the hurricane.	Req. \$	846,729,750
	Rec. \$	-
	CFB \$	(846,729,750)
<p>The recurring needs recommended in this budget, \$2.9 million for the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) NC Forest Service and \$1.6 million for the Department of Public Safety (DPS), reflect the annualized costs for those programs. After Reserve funds are exhausted, OSBM will budget these items out of the General Fund.</p>		
A2 Appropriates Helene Disaster Recovery Fund		FY 2024-25
Transfers the balance of the Helene Disaster Recovery Fund to support housing recovery and development. SL 2024-51 established the Fund "to provide necessary and appropriate relief and assistance from the effects of Hurricane Helene." These funds will be used to support the Helene Home Reconstruction and Repair Program (\$150 million), to fulfill unmet needs of homeowners and renters (\$25 million), and to support the development and rehabilitation of affordable housing (\$50 million).	Req. \$	225,000,000
	Rec. \$	-
	CFB \$	(225,000,000)
Total Availability		\$ 1,071,729,750

Strengthening the Economy		FY 2024-25
B1 Helene Business Recovery Grants		
Provides grants to businesses that suffered physical damage and/or significant economic loss due to Hurricane Helene. The Department of Revenue will distribute up to \$100 million in grants to businesses that experienced a loss in taxable sales of at least 20% (and at least \$6,000) from the fourth quarter of 2023 to the same quarter in 2024. Grants will be equal to 25% of the reduction in taxable sales, less any Helene recovery grants from the State, federal government, Dogwood Health Trust, or Appalachia Community Capital, up to a maximum of \$75,000. The department will notify businesses of their eligibility and invite them to apply. If available funds are oversubscribed as of the end of the application period, the department will reduce all grants proportionally. Businesses must be in at least one of the 28 counties that are eligible for FEMA Individual Assistance and all categories of Public Assistance to be eligible for this program.	Req. \$	100,000,000
	Rec. \$	100,000,000
	NetApp. \$	-
B2 Expanded Dogwood Health Trust Partnership Grants		
Provides \$50 million to Appalachian Community Capital to expand the successful Dogwood Health Trust to provide grants of up to \$75,000 to businesses with up to 50 employees or \$10 million in annual revenues that suffered physical damage and/or significant economic loss due to Hurricane Helene. The grants will target service-providing businesses, farms, and other businesses without significant taxable sales to avoid duplication with the Helene Business Recovery Grants. Businesses must be in the 28 counties that are eligible for FEMA Individual Assistance and all categories of Public Assistance to be eligible for this program.	Req. \$	50,000,000
	Rec. \$	50,000,000
	NetApp. \$	-

B3 Small Town Business Infrastructure Revitalization Grants

Provides funds to the Department of Commerce’s Rural Economic Development Division (REDD) to award grants to small towns and rural areas in federally declared disaster counties to support rebuilding damaged local government and business infrastructure in downtowns and other business districts affected by Hurricane Helene. Projects including measures to ensure rebuilt infrastructure is more resilient to future flooding events and other natural disasters will receive priority. Individual grant awards may not exceed \$1 million.

Req. \$	30,000,000
Rec. \$	30,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

B4 VisitNC Tourism Promotion

Provides \$15 million to the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina's (EDPNC) VisitNC division to support and revitalize western North Carolina's tourism economy. This allocation includes funding for a targeted media campaigns aimed at encouraging both in-state and out-of-state tourists to return to the region in 2025. EDPNC will also distribute funds to local tourism offices to support their efforts and to develop a coordinated market strategy to attract visitors back to western North Carolina. Remaining funds will be dedicated to developing programs and campaigns designed to attract new businesses to the region.

Req. \$	15,000,000
Rec. \$	15,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

B5 Local Government Revenue Replacement Grants

Addresses dire local government funding needs by providing \$100 million for revenue replacement grants. Many local governments in hard-hit counties are implementing budget cuts in response to declining revenues at a time when residents need local government services more than ever. These Local Government Revenue Replacement Grants would protect schools, health programs, and emergency services from harmful budget cuts.

Req. \$	100,000,000
Rec. \$	100,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

These grants would complement the existing Local Government Cash Flow Loans program at the Department of State Treasurer. Combining revenue-replacement grants with cash-flow loans provides quick, flexible, and predictable funding to meet local governments' many recovery needs.

Safe and Warm Places to Live

C1 Helene Home Reconstruction and Repair Program

Addresses the urgent need to start rebuilding homes this spring by establishing a housing program in Commerce's Division of Community Revitalization (DCR). The program will be CDBG-DR compliant to ensure a smooth transition to that funding source once HUD allocates funding, which is expected to take at least one year but has taken as long as two years following Hurricanes Matthew and Florence.

	FY 2024-25
Req. \$	150,000,000
Rec. \$	150,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

Projects will include reconstruction and rehabilitations of homes as well as buyouts, particularly for those who cannot wait for federal recovery programs because they are living in temporary housing or housing that presents urgent safety or health risk. This funding will allow DCR to start the recovery program immediately and could assist at least 225 of the 5,100 homes that are estimated to need rebuilding be completed or in construction.

C2 Affordable Housing

Provides funds to the Housing Finance Agency (HFA) to create housing development incentives for high-quality, resilient, affordable housing options in the affected communities. Funds may be used to repair damaged rental units and shelters impacted by Hurricane Helene, rehabilitate single-family housing for households with income up to 120% area median income (AMI), or provide gap funding for new rental development for households up to 80% AMI.

Req. \$	50,000,000
Rec. \$	50,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

C3 Rental, Mortgage, and Utility Assistance

Provides direct assistance to individuals in disaster-declared counties who have been displaced or whose livelihood is affected and who are unable to afford rental, mortgage, or utility costs due to Hurricane Helene. These individuals often must still pay current rental leases or mortgages while their damaged homes or places of employment are repaired. The Department of Health and Human Services will develop and run this program.

Req. \$	25,000,000
Rec. \$	25,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

C4 Homeowner and Renter Unmet Needs

Provides funds to help homeowners and renters remain in their communities by supporting minor to moderate repairs that can be completed immediately, covering needs that are not FEMA eligible, and filling gaps in FEMA funding. Such repairs will reduce the number of individuals and families living in temporary housing and help reduce area depopulation. The funds will focus on repairing or rehabilitating both multi-unit and single-family rental properties in the most impacted counties with the goal of getting housing units back in service as quickly as possible. Commerce's DCR division will develop and run this program.

Req. \$	25,000,000
Rec. \$	25,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

C5 Back@Home - Helene

Provides funds to the Back@Home program to expand current programming in impacted areas in western North Carolina. Back@Home provides housing stabilization services and financial assistance for individuals experiencing homelessness to help transition them to permanent supportive housing. This funding would also support case management to evaluate households' needs and connect them to resources.

Req. \$	10,000,000
Rec. \$	10,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

C6 Disaster Legal Services

Provides funds to OSBM to grant to NC Legal Aid and Pisgah Legal Services to support disaster victims. Legal support for disaster-impacted individuals will prevent and mitigate fraud/scams early in the recovery process and help victims resolve probate, title, and easement issues, helping avoid delays in the long-term recovery process. OSBM will split the funds equally between these two organizations.

Req. \$	3,000,000
Rec. \$	3,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

Repairing Infrastructure

D1 Private Road and Bridge Repairs and Replacement

Provides funds to repair or replace private roads and bridges, including meeting eligible costs that exceed federal guidelines. Restoring these bridges is critical for many residents to gain access to their homes to either return or to begin the rebuilding process. It is also imperative to ensure emergency vehicle access to protect life and safety, without endangering the lives of first responders.

FY 2024-25	
Req. \$	75,000,000
Rec. \$	75,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

D2 Local Parks Restoration and Rebuilding Grants

Provides funding for grants to local governments to repair or rebuild local park facilities, greenway systems, or natural habitat areas damaged by Hurricane Helene. Local parks are vital to the region's economy and add recreational, educational, and environmental value to communities, improving the quality of life for residents and the visitor experience for tourists.

Req. \$	25,000,000
Rec. \$	25,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

In many counties, Helene damaged many, if not all, local park facilities. For example, in Mitchell and Henderson Counties, all park facilities were damaged or lost due to flooding. In Asheville, eight of the city's nine community centers and all of its parks were flooded.

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) within Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) will disburse these grants, which will not require a match from the local government receiving funds.

D3 Flood Abatement and Water Quality Protection Grants

Provides funding for conservation and restoration of the state’s streams, parks, and trails damaged by Hurricane Helene. Funding may be used to provide grants to nonprofits and government agencies for projects for restoring wetlands, streams, and riparian buffers to increase natural flood protection and reduce erosion in the disaster area. These projects will help the region restore water quality in important wetlands, streams, wildlife habitats, and fisheries. Funding may also be used for projects resulting in the restoration of outdoor recreational opportunities including but not limited to restoring trail networks in western North Carolina. These funds will be administered by DNCR's NC Land and Water Fund.

Req. \$	25,000,000
Rec. \$	25,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

D4 Debris Removal Unmet Needs

Provides funds to OSBM to distribute for debris removal. Debris removal needs in western North Carolina exceed the capacity of any one state agency. GROW NC and the Division of Emergency Management (DEM) will work with relevant state agency and local stakeholders to expedite debris clean-up efforts while maximizing the use of federal funds and existing state program resources. These funds shall be used to fill any identified gaps in debris cleanup needs not met by other programs.

Req. \$	12,000,000
Rec. \$	12,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

D5 Resilience Backup Power Measures

Provides funding to the State Energy Office in the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to provide grants to councils of government, counties, and other entities to provide solar power and battery backup power for emergency operations and other critical infrastructure. Funds may be used to install solar and storage microgrids that would allow critical infrastructure to remain operational when the electric grid goes down. These solar and battery arrays are mobile and can also be permanently attached to the local grid to act as long-term microgrids for future emergencies.

Req. \$	10,000,000
Rec. \$	10,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

D6 Septic Repairs and Replacement Grants

Provides a first installment of funds to the Division of Waste Management in DEQ to start addressing the estimated \$500 million need for repairs and replacement of 30,000 septic systems. To date no state or federal funding has been appropriated for this need. DEQ will distribute funding to existing septic repair programs in communities including but not limited to: Haywood Waterways, Buncombe County Septic program, and Mountain True.

Req. \$	4,000,000
Rec. \$	4,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

D7 Recycling Infrastructure and Recycling Business Grants

Provides grants and technical assistance funds for the Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service in DEQ to rebuild recycling and material recovery infrastructure that can assist with post-disaster clean-up. Hurricane Helene caused more than \$23 million in damage across 187 county recycling drop-off sites. Funds may be used for rebuilding convenience centers, recycling equipment replacement or repair, resources needed for land clearing, and infrastructure including but not limited to trucks, shredders, industrial forklifts, skid steers, industrial scales, scale houses, processing equipment, warehouses, dumpsters, trailers, and residential trash & recycling collection carts.

Req. \$	2,000,000
Rec. \$	2,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

D8 Small and Volunteer Fire Department Grants

Provides funds to the Office of the State Fire Marshall to disburse as grants to small and volunteer fire departments in disaster declared counties to cover expenses incurred due to Hurricane Helene and to purchase equipment or make capital improvements to help them be prepared in the event of an emergency.

Req. \$	1,000,000
Rec. \$	1,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

D9 Repair and Renovation of Affected State Facilities

Provides funds to OSBM to allocate for the repair and renovation of state facilities damaged by Hurricane Helene. Funding will provide repairs to state parks, state forests, health care, and other facilities that suffered flooding and wind damage. Funds will also be used to repair the two correctional institutions in western North Carolina that closed. Federal funds will be used to complete these projects where possible.

Req. \$	135,000,000
Rec. \$	135,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

D10 Continuity of Government Operations

Provides funds to OSBM for a reserve for continuity of state operations for costs resulting from agency response to Hurricane Helene. Eligible expenses range from revenue replacement at state parks and agriculture facilities to non-FEMA reimbursable overtime and on-call expenses to the replacement of storm-damaged equipment. In addition, funds could be used to address cash flow needs as agencies wait for FEMA reimbursement and insurance payments. OSBM would administer these funds and all state agencies and the UNC system would be eligible to receive these funds.

Req. \$	20,000,000
Rec. \$	20,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

D11 Emergency Management Core Capacity

Increases capacity within DPS' Division of Emergency Management (DEM) for core financial, compliance, and communications responsibilities of disaster recovery. DEM needs at least 15 more staff to manage the volume and complexity of recovery and relief efforts, including the management of both federal and state funds.

Req. \$	1,606,250
Rec. \$	1,606,250
NetApp. \$	-

Supporting Farmers

E1 Helene Agriculture Disaster Farmer Recovery Grants

Provides funds to DACS for grants to farmers for verified uninsured losses to crops, livestock, aquaculture, and infrastructure. Payments to eligible farmers will be calculated and scaled based on available funding and verified losses. Agricultural production in the mountains tends to be predominantly small operations. Because of the amount of specialty crop production in the region, it is estimated that as little as 5 to 10% of crop losses are insured. Farms must be in the 28 counties that are eligible for FEMA Individual Assistance and all categories of Public Assistance to be eligible. DACS may use up to \$80,000 for program administration.

FY 2024-25	
Req. \$	15,000,000
Rec. \$	15,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

E2 Waterway and Land Rehabilitation

Provides funds to DACS' Soil & Water Division for natural resource restoration projects that will enable farmers to resume production and protect communities against additional flood damage, such as stream debris removal, streambank stabilization, stream restoration, cropland restoration, farm road repair, and reconstruction of best management practices. Funds may be used for cost share to streamflow rehabilitation project sponsors including local governments and conservation districts, and to farmers for restoring farmland and resource protection measures. Funds may also be used for engineering and technical assistance to support these projects. DACS may use these funds across programs to maximize impact and federal funding.

Req. \$	100,000,000
Rec. \$	100,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

E3 Working Farms and Forests Preservation

Provides funds for the Agricultural Development & Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (ADFPTF) to protect working farms and forests and to support farmland preservation efforts in Helene affected counties. Hurricane Helene is expected to increase the demand for conservation easements. ADFPTF uses agricultural conservation easements, farmland preservation plans, and agricultural development projects to preserve working farms and forests.

Req. \$	12,500,000
Rec. \$	12,500,000
NetApp. \$	-

E4 Fire Season Preparation

Provides funds to the North Carolina Forest Service (NCFS) in DACS to prepare for the upcoming wildfire season. North Carolina leads the nation in wildland urban interface, which is related to the number of homes that are in the woods and could be directly impacted by wildfires. Damage from Hurricane Helene has created significant additional fire risk for the 2025 fire season, which typically begins in the spring. The area is already seeing elevated fire risk this year due to increased debris. This funding will support necessary operations for the NCFS, including on-call and overtime pay, equipment repairs and replacement, including repairs for a helicopter that is currently out of service, and one FTE and operating funds for the wildfire weather and fuels intelligence program. The fuels intelligence program provides essential information to firefighters and the public on fire risk, prescribed burns, and prevention and control of wildfires.

Req. \$	16,073,500
Rec. \$	16,073,500
NetApp. \$	-

Of this funding, \$370,000 is recurring for the wildfire weather and fuels intelligence program staff and Fire Weather Intelligence portal.

E5 Wildfire Risk Reduction

Provides funds to NCFS in DACS to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire. Hurricane Helene impacted over 820,000 acres of western NC forest. The storm left significant ignitable fuel that will impact seasonal fire danger for years to come. More intense fire seasons – both in scale and severity – are expected due to the downed timber and debris accumulation. NCFS needs additional staff, specifically hand crews, to reduce the wildfire risk in mountainous terrain. Hand crews implement fuel reduction treatments and assist on prescribed burns - both essential to wildfire risk reduction. In addition, they can respond to and control wildfires to protect the public.

Req. \$	3,350,000
Rec. \$	3,350,000
NetApp. \$	-

Of this funding, \$2.55 million is recurring to support 22 FTE for hand crews as well as four FTE to operate fire-fighting equipment. Non-recurring funds are for position start-up costs and hand crew equipment (trucks, radios, hand tools, PPE, etc.).

Families and Children

F1 K-12 Summer Learning Programs

Provides funding to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) for Helene-impacted school districts that missed 15+ instructional days to bolster proficiency rates on End of Grade and End of Course assessments. DPI estimates that 60% of K-8 and 20% of high school students would participate in this program. This funding would cover the full cost of 30 days of summer instruction to students at over 100 public schools in the impacted counties.

FY 2024-25	
Req. \$	34,200,000
Rec. \$	34,200,000
NetApp. \$	-

F2 Food Banks Assistance

Provides funds to DACS for distribution to food banks in the impacted area, including \$4 million to MANNA Food Bank, \$6.6 million to Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwest NC, \$5 million to Second Harvest Food Bank of Metrolina, and \$400,000 to Feeding the Carolinas. Funds will ensure that food banks in Helene impacted counties can continue to provide food to the more than 400,000 food insecure individuals in affected counties throughout the recovery. Funds may be used to support recovery efforts, purchasing refrigeration units, refrigerated trucks, other equipment, and food.

Req. \$	20,000,000
Rec. \$	20,000,000
NetApp. \$	-

In addition, \$4 million will be distributed equally to Food Bank of the Albemarle, Second Harvest Food Bank of Southeast NC, Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC, and Inter Faith Food Shuttle for providing food, transportation, and staffing support to food banks within disaster counties in the west.

F3 Emergency Student Aid Grants

Provides \$2 million to the UNC Board of Governors to assist students impacted by Hurricane Helene with paying tuition, fees, and emergency expenses that affect students' ability to remain enrolled. UNC Asheville, Appalachian State University, and Western Carolina University have fully expended the \$5 million previously received for this purpose. Additional funding will allow these universities to not only award grants to all students, but also will allow students who previously received partial grants to receive the maximum amount of \$2,500.	Req. \$	2,000,000
	Rec. \$	2,000,000
	NetApp. \$	-

Total Expenditures	\$ 1,071,729,750
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Provisions

G1 Extend the State of Emergency

Extends the state of emergency that was declared statewide from March 1, 2025, until October 1, 2025, by amending SL 2024-51 section 3.1.

G2 CDBG-DR Administration and Reporting Technical Changes

Shifts authority to administer future CDBG-DR awards from NCORR to DCR within Commerce and amends GS 143B-1040(c) to allow NCORR to manage CDBG-DR funds for Hurricanes Matthew and Florence and Tropical Storm Fred. DCR would gain authority to administer CDBG-DR funds for Hurricane Helene and future storms in GS 143B-431(d) and would report on CDBG-DR fund use. A technical amendment to GS 166A-19.11 would limit DPS reporting on CDBG-DR funds to the previous storms.

G3 Lunch Reimbursement During Emergencies

Amends GS 138-7 by adding an exemption to allow agencies to receive reimbursements for lunch expenses when overnight stays are not required. GS 138-6 allows agencies to reimburse lunches only during travel that includes an overnight stay.

G4 Change Water Infrastructure Emergency Bridge Loans to Grants

Amends SL 2024-53, Sections 4C.7, which established a bridge loan program for emergency water infrastructure repairs within DEQ, to change these loans to local governments into grants.

G5 Update Underground Storage Tank Loan Programs to Grant Funding

Amends SL 2024-53, Section 4C.8, which established an emergency infrastructure bridge loan program for commercial underground storage tanks (UST) within DEQ, to transition these bridge loans to grants to owners and operators of commercial USTs who need short-term financial assistance due to Hurricane Helene.

G6 Helene Reporting Requirement Amendments

Amends SL 2024-51, Section 7.1(h), as amended by SL 2023-53, Section 5.6, to change the reporting date on Helene funds to 45 days after the end of the quarter instead of 15 days after the end of the quarter. This change will ensure that all expenditures from the prior quarter have been appropriately accounted for. Payment on invoices is typically due within 30 days; extending this timeframe will ensure expenses from the quarter have been paid and included in the North Carolina Financial System, leading to more accurate and thorough reporting.