

Disaster Unemployment Assistance Available In 25 Counties Following Hurricane Helene

North Carolina Department of Commerce

RALEIGH, N.C. - Following a federal disaster declaration resulting from the devasting impacts from Hurricane Helene, the Division of Employment Security (DES) has announced that 25 North Carolina counties and the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina have been approved for Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA).

DUA benefits are available for residents of 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, and Yancey Counties as well as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina. Additional counties may be added to the list of those eligible for DUA at a later date.

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. Business owners and self-employed individuals affected by the storm may also qualify for benefits.

People in the 25 counties as well as the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina have 60 days from Oct. 1 to file an application for DUA at des.nc.gov. The deadline to apply is Dec. 2, 2024.

DUA is available in these counties for weeks of unemployment effective Sept. 29 and may last for up to 26 weeks. Eligibility for DUA is determined weekly, and you must continue to be out of work as a direct result of the disaster each week to get unemployment benefits.

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.

Applying for DUA

1. You must apply for state unemployment benefits. If you are determined to be ineligible for or have exhausted your regular benefits, then you may be eligible for a DUA claim.

2. You will need the following to file for unemployment:

- Name and address of all employers you worked with within the last 24 months.
- County of residence.
- County of employment.
- Mailing address and ZIP code.
- Valid telephone number.
- Your Social Security number or your Alien Registration number.
- Have proof of employment and income if you’re self-employed, a farmer, or a commercial fisher.

3. To get DUA benefits, all required documentation must be submitted within 21 days from the day the DUA application is filed. DES will work with people who cannot provide all documentation to ensure that their unemployment benefits are not delayed.

Claims are filed through the DES website at des.nc.gov. If you are not able to file through the website, you can call the DUA Hotline at 919-629-3857 to apply for benefits.

For more information and an updated list of approved counties, go to our website at: des.nc.gov.