

Hurricane Florence Claims Two More Lives

By Donna Martinez

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Hurricane Florence has now officially claimed 39 lives in the state. The latest fatalities are related to storm clean-up.

- A 47-year-old man found dead outside a Duplin County residence on Sept. 21 due to a head injury sustained when he fell from a ladder while repairing storm damage.

- A 69-year-old man in Pender County who died on Sept. 22 after falling from a roof while cleaning storm debris and repairing damage.

As friends and family mourn loved ones lost to the storm and its aftermath, Governor Roy Cooper urged North Carolinians recovering from Florence to apply with FEMA for assistance.

"Florence cut a broad path of death and destruction through our state and we will not soon forget this storm or the lives it claimed," Gov. Cooper said. "For people working to recover, applying with FEMA is the single most important thing you can do. If you suffered damage from Florence, make sure you apply for assistance right away."

Anyone whose home was damaged by Florence is encouraged to begin the FEMA registration process by calling 1-800-621-FEMA to register via telephone or by visiting disasterassistance.gov to register online. People can also apply at disaster recovery centers open around the state in hard-hit communities, including two new centers opening this week in Harnett and Duplin counties.

As of today, more than 104,000 North Carolinians have registered with FEMA since Florence hit and nearly \$70 million in federal disaster assistance has been approved for individuals and families.

Back@Home North Carolina

Today, Governor Roy Cooper announced the start of Back@Home North Carolina, a \$12 million initiative to help families still in Hurricane Florence disaster shelters or staying in unsafe or unstable arrangements quickly transition to safe and sustainable longer-term housing.

"For many people impacted by this disaster, getting back on their feet will take time," Governor Cooper said. "Back@Home will help families move from disaster shelters to safe housing as

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they begin the process of rebuilding their lives."

This week, Back@Home team members are traveling to impacted areas of the state with Multi-Agency Shelter Transition teams to reach families and individuals quickly and help them find and secure stable housing options and other needed resources.

Back@Home is for individuals and families who are not eligible for Individual Assistance through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or who may be receiving limited FEMA assistance and still need help securing housing or other supportive services. Services include help finding housing, rent and utility assistance, move-in supplies, and, if needed, help accessing other resources like job training and placement and child care.

"Making sure families impacted by this storm have a secure and stable place to live is an important part of North Carolina's recovery process," said DHHS Secretary Mandy Cohen, M.D., "Having a home lays the foundation families need to be healthy and safe."

The program will be administered by the NC Department of Health and Human Services in partnership with other state agencies, including the NC Housing Finance Agency, the Department of Public Safety and NC Emergency Management, as well as other nonprofits: North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness, Socialserve, American Red Cross, Alliance Behavioral Healthcare, Eastpointe, First Fruit Ministries, Southeast Family Violence Center, Trillium Health Resources, and Volunteers of America.

Back@Home is based on an innovative program implemented in Texas after Hurricane Harvey in 2017. For more information about Back@Home North Carolina, visit backathome.org.

Disaster Nutrition Benefits Expand to 28th County

Many residents in 28 counties heavily impacted by Hurricane Florence are eligible for help buying food. More information on this help is available at:
ncdhhs.gov/assistance/hurricane-florence/after-hurricane-florence-help-buying-food.

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This help is available in 28 counties: Bladen, Beaufort, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Duplin, Greene, Harnett, Hoke, Hyde, Johnston, Jones, Lee, Lenoir, Moore, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender, Pitt, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, Wayne, and Wilson.

As of Monday, nearly 300,000 people in impacted counties had received this help. This includes nearly 175,000 people who have received a supplement to their existence Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) benefits and more than 125,000 new people who were not already receiving help through the FNS program.

Greene County has been added to the list of counties whose residents can apply for emergency help buying food.

Sign up will end as soon as October 6 in most counties, so people are encouraged to apply right away. Locations and hours of application sites in each county are available on the DHHS website. People can also dial 2-1-1 for information on application sites in their county.

Donations and Volunteers Needed

The North Carolina Disaster Relief Fund is available for donations to support North Carolina's response to Hurricane Florence. To donate, visit governor.nc.gov or text FLORENCE to 20222.

Volunteer opportunities are available through VolunteerNC.org to help survivors of Hurricane Florence immediately and throughout the recovery process.

Additional Information and Resources Available

The NC 211 information line can provide callers with housing, recovery and other storm-related details. Dial 2-1-1 or 888-892-1162, or text FLORENCE to 898211. The information line is staffed around the clock to connect North Carolinians to storm resources. Other resources can be obtained by visiting ncdps.gov/florence or following NC Emergency

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