

# **MEDIA RELEASE**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **Residents in Western North Carolina Can Apply for Help Buying Food Following Hurricane Helene**

Franklin, NC

The United States Department of Agriculture and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services have announced that Macon County is eligible to receive Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (D-SNAP) as a result of Hurricane Helene. Macon County is one of the 25 counties in North Carolina that was declared eligible for individual assistance by Governor Roy Cooper. Any household that resided within one of the designated counties at the time of the September 2024 storm (Hurricane Helene) and suffered disaster losses may be eligible to receive temporary D-SNAP assistance. D-SNAP benefits are provide via an electronic debit-like card and can be used to purchase food items at grocery stores and other authorized retailers.

To be eligible, a person MUST:

- Live in one of the 25 designated counties
- Be a member of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians living in zip code 28719
- Have suffered losses/damages related to Hurricane Helene, such as damage to property or loss of income
- Have proof of identity and proof of residency (if available)
- Have income and resources below certain levels
- Not currently be receiving benefits through the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) program. People receiving FNS can also get extra help buying food, but do not need to fill out a D-SNAP application.

Please note that residents seeking assistance may apply beginning Friday, October 18, 2024 through Thursday, October 24, 2024 for the D-SNAP. To apply, please visit the Macon County Distribution Center located in the vacant Ingles at 183 Holly Springs Plaza, Franklin, North Carolina or call the D-SNAP Virtual Call Center at 1-844-453-1117. Weekday hours of D-SNAP at the Macon County Distribution Center are 8:00am to 4:00pm and weekend hours are 9:00am to 2:00pm.

Residents can also use the online ePASS Pre-Registration Tool, which will open on Tuesday, October 15, 2024 and close on Tuesday, October 22, 2024. Once the pre-registration is completed, applicants will be issued a confirmation number and will receive a call to complete the interview part of the application.

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