

Hurricane Helene Recovery Resources FAQ's

When will storm debris be picked-up by City of Tampa Solid Waste department?

Residents that are ready for storm debris collection immediately may request collection by calling the City of Tampa Solid Waste Call Center at 813-274-8811 or online at <https://tampaconnect.com>. Storm debris includes vegetative, household items and construction debris created due to the damaging effects of Hurricane Helene.

For customers requiring additional time for assessment and removal of vegetative-storm debris, and damaged household items, the official collection will begin on Monday, October 7, 2024. As of this date, call in requests will not be required. Crews will canvas each neighborhood within City of Tampa limits and collect storm related debris from the curb.

When will regular garbage and recycling collection resume?

Solid Waste services has resumed regular garbage and recycling collection. Yard waste and regular SWEEP collection are suspended at this time.

Where can residents take storm debris?

The McKay Bay Transfer Station is extending its operating hours to accommodate the increased debris. City of Tampa residents can dispose of accepted items at no additional charge. A full list of accepted items can be found on the Solid Waste website. Extended McKay Bay Transfer Station hours starting Monday, September 30, 2024:

- Monday through Friday: 7am - 7 pm
- Saturday: 7am - 3:30pm

Where of City of Tampa Comfort Station locations:

Three comfort centers are open in our hardest hit neighborhoods:

- DeSoto Park: 2617 Corrine St. and Marjorie Park / Davis Islands: 97 Columbia Dr.
Daily thru Saturday, October 12th
7am - 7pm
providing free food (lunch and dinner), resources, restrooms, showers, water, ice, and laundry services to those in need.
- Gandy Civic Association (4207 W Oklahoma)
Monday through Friday thru Thursday, October 17th
7am - 6pm
Providing food, water, supplies (tarps, hygiene kits, and more), resources and restrooms to those in need.

Where can residents obtain permitting information in addition to the Hanna City Center?

All three above comfort center sites include pop-up permit centers for expedited permit review for select permits (i.e. trade, electrical, A/C change out, Interior Alteration) and inspections related to storm damage repair.

City of Tampa Permitting staff are onsite to answer questions and guide residents through the necessary processes.

- Desoto Park: 2617 Corrine St and Marjorie Park / Davis Islands: 97 Columbia Dr
Monday - Friday thru October 17th
7am - 7pm
Saturday and Sunday
10 am - 5 pm
- Gandy Civic Association: 4207 W. Oklahoma Ave.
Monday – Friday thru October 17th
7am - 6pm

What resources are available for assistance removing damaged belongings from my residence?

- Samaritan's Purse Hotline: 1-833-747-1234 offers free assistance for homeowners affected by the disaster. Volunteers may be able to assist with removal of personal property and furniture, flood clean-up, sanitizing, chainsaw work, debris clean-up on private property and temporary roof tarping.
- The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) State Veterans' Service Officers are deployed to Disaster Recovery Centers in multiple counties to connect Veterans and their families with interrupted benefits, services and support. Call 727-319-7440 or send an email to FDVA.VSO@FDVA.FL.GOV

What Community Partners should I contact for assistance?

- [Salvation Army](#)
- [American Red Cross](#) 1-800-733-2767
- [Metropolitan Ministries](#)
- [United Way Suncoast](#)
- [Bay Area Legal Services](#)
- Dial 211 – Hillsborough County Crisis Center (Donations/Volunteering)

Where can I go if I need food?

Feeding Tampa Bay is operational and distributing food from their Causeway Center.

3624 Causeway Blvd, Tampa, FL 33619

(813) 254-1190

<https://www.feedingtampabay.org/>

Monday – Friday: 8am - 4pm

Saturday & Sunday: Closed

How do I find FEMA assistance?

FEMA assistance is now available to City of Tampa residents who experienced damages/losses due to Hurricane Helene - financial help for temporary lodging, basic home repairs and other disaster-caused expenses.

Apply online at [DisasterAssistance.gov](https://www.disasterassistance.gov), the FEMA app or 1-800-621-3362.

FEMA has opened a Disaster Recovery Center in Hillsborough County. Residents can receive one-on-one help from FEMA representatives, where they can ask questions, get help with applying for assistance, etc.

Center Location:

Hillsborough Community College - The Regent

6437 Watson Rd.

Riverview, FL 33578

Open 9 am - 6 pm Monday-Sunday

How Do I know I am dealing with legitimate FEMA personnel?

FEMA personnel working in areas impacted by Hurricane Helene carry official photo identification. FEMA representatives never charge applicants for disaster assistance, inspections or help in filling out applications. Don't believe anyone who promises a disaster grant in return for payment. Don't give your banking information to a person claiming to be a FEMA housing inspector. FEMA inspectors are never authorized to collect your personal financial information. If you believe you are the victim of a scam, report it immediately to your local police or sheriff's department or contact Florida's Office of the Attorney General by calling 866-9-NO-SCAM (866-966-7226) or visit myfloridalegal.com. To file a fraud complaint, go online to Scam Report (myfloridalegal.com).

How do I report price gouging?

If you suspect price gouging, report it at Florida's Price Gouging Hotline: 1(866) 9NO-SCAM or via the website: www.MyFloridaLegal.com

What agency can I contact regarding hurricane landlord related disputes (renters rights)?

Disaster Legal Hotline: 833-514-2940

How can I protect myself from contractor scams:

After a disaster, qualified contractors are usually in high demand. Scammers or unqualified out-of-state workers may take advantage of Floridians in need of expert service.

If you have been approached to have work done on or at your home, you can check if that individual is licensed through the Department of Business and Professional Regulation (DBPR) or by going to myfloridalicense.com.

If property is damaged from the storm, the Florida Attorney General's Office offers these tips when hiring a contractor:

- **Insurance evaluation** - Ensure repair work will be covered under your insurance policy. Have an insurance company evaluate damage before arranging repairs.
- **Estimates** – Obtain at least three written, itemized estimates with costs on bids or repairs.
- **Bogus offers** - Watch out for unsolicited offers or contractors claiming to perform repairs at a discount with leftover supplies from another job
- **Do your research** – To check on a company's reputation, look for references online or ask a friend. Also check to see if a company is properly licensed, insured, and if there are any consumer complaints filed against a licensed contractor at Florida Department of Business & Professional Regulation or by calling the Florida Attorney General's Office at (866) 9NO-SCAM.
- **Bonded** - Make sure a contractor is bonded and verified with a bonding agency
Read the fine print – Although it may be daunting, read the entire contract before signing to ensure it includes the required buyer's right to cancel language. Understand penalties that may be imposed for cancellation.
- **Liens** - Insist on releases of any liens that could be placed on the property from all subcontractors prior to making final payments. Homeowners may unknowingly have liens placed against their properties by suppliers or subcontractors who have not been paid by the contractor. If the contractor fails to pay them, the liens will remain on the title.
- **Deposits and final payment** - Never pay the full amount of a repair expense upfront and be wary before providing large deposits. Do not sign a certificate of completion or make final payment until satisfied with the work performed.

What resources are available for small businesses?

- Florida Emergency Bridge Loans are available to businesses across Hillsborough County that were impacted by Hurricane Helene providing short-term, zero-interest working capital loans that are intended to bridge the gap between the time a disaster impacts a business and when a business has secured longer-term recovery funding, such as federally or commercially available loans, insurance claims, or other resources. Visit: www.floridacommerce.my.site.com/RebuildFloridaBusinessLoanFund to learn more about the program, view the lending guidelines, and required documentation, and complete an application by the Nov. 24, 2024, deadline. More information is available by calling (833) 832-4494 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loans are available for nonprofits and businesses of all sizes affected by Hurricane Helene: <https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/disaster-assistance>