

# DHHS gains temporary Helene relief options for child care, restaurants - DHHS gains temporary Helene relief options for child care, food assistance, restaurants

October 16, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC)

Author: RICHARD CRAVER Staff Reporter | Section: A | 1013 Words

Page: 3 OpenURL Link

The latest series of Hurricane Helene public health declarations from the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services involve temporary approvals to the operations of affected child care facilities and restaurants.

Gov. Roy Cooper issued Executive Order 319, which provides DHHS with "new flexibilities regarding child care, public health, NC Medicaid, social services and vocational rehabilitation services."

There are 25 counties, along with the Cherokee Indians of N.C., that have been approved for disaster relief efforts: Alexander, Alleghany, Ashe, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Clay, Cleveland, Gaston, Haywood, Henderson, Jackson, Lincoln, Macon, Madison, McDowell, Mecklenburg, Mitchell, Polk, Rutherford, Swaim, Transylvania, Watauga, Wilkes and Yancey.

For example, the order enables child care facilities and homes to re-open or continue to operate through the response and recovery process.

It also allows temporary waiver of regulations in public health, child welfare, Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families ("TANF") and vocational rehabilitation services to ensure continuity of service and access to benefits.

Also included: extending deadlines for required immunizations for school-aged children and required trainings for local health department personnel.

NC Medicaid is being required to create and review its clinical coverage policies to address needs to individuals in the aftermath of Helene.

DHHS is allowed to temporarily waive or modify the enforcement of several human services regulations governing foster care licensure and child welfare including in-person visits, physical settings and re-licensure.

Also being temporarily waived are regulatory constraints on certain Division of Aging programs, including special assistance, in-home aide services, home delivered meals and the congregant nutrition program.

#### Food assistance

Resident in the 25 counties declared eligible for disaster relief programs can apply for help buying food through the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance program.

DHHS estimates more than 150,000 people will apply for up to \$120 million in D-SNAP benefits, which are good for up to nine months.

Phase one of the program starts Friday with applications being accepted starting Tuesday by calling 1-844-453-1117.

DHHS has established the following application process with the call center opened from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on Oct. 18 and Oct. 21-24, along with being open from 9 a.m. to noon Oct 19-20.

Residents are encouraged to apply for D-SNAP by phone on their assigned day by last name, but will not be turned away if they apply any time during the application period.

The format is those with last names starting with A through to call on Friday, those H through M call on Saturday, N through S on Sunday, T through Z on Monday, and open to all on Oct. 22-24.

The program is being made available to individuals and households not currently receiving Food and Nutrition Services benefits who were impacted by Helene.

Eligible households will be notified within three days of completing the application. They will receive a one-time benefit on an Electronic Benefits Transfer, or EBT card, to help buy food.

The exact amount will depend on household size, income and disaster losses. Individuals above these limits may still be eligible dependent on disaster expenses.

Individuals and households will have until Oct. 24 to apply.

"We are committed to using every tool to support the recovery of our friends, families and fellow North Carolinians in western NC - now and for the long haul," said Kody Kinsley, the state's health secretary.

Benefit cards will be available for pickup at the D-SNAP locations in each county, or by mail.

#### Restaurants

Separately, DHHS said it is working with restaurants and food establishments - in conjunction with local health departments - to help them reopen safely while infrastructure continues to be repaired or rebuilt in their county.

"Restaurants are deeply rooted in the communities they serve, and we are working closely with businesses and local health departments to get them back open safely as soon as possible," said Larry Michael, DHHS' state environmental health director.

Restaurants who lack their usual sources of power, drinking water and wastewater treatment can reopen through an Emergency Operations Plan developed with their local health department.

More than 70 restaurants' emergency operations plans have been approved as of Oct. 9, including those in Ashe, Catawba, Jackson, Lincoln, Watauga and Wilkes counties.

Restaurants may need to: limit or simplify their menu based on the amount of water available; switch to take-out service only; or obtain a porta-potty.

Water used in food preparation must come from an approved source, such as the municipal water system, an approved and tested community well or water supply company, or bottled water. If a water storage truck, tank or other container is used, it should be designed for potable water.

Water for employee handwashing must be provided. If using flushing toilets, either gray water or other non-potable water must be available to flush them.

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# Trump campaign crowdfunds millions in aid online - Trump's campaign crowdfunded millions online in an untraditional approach to emergency relief

October 16, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Author: JAMES POLLARD Associated Press | Section: A | 1068 Words Page: 4 OpenURL Link

NEW YORK - Former President Donald Trump's campaign is using GoFundMe to rally its network of deep-pocketed backers and everyday donors around the survivors of his July assassination attempt and Hurricane Helene's destruction, bucking more traditional avenues of emergency relief.

The two high-profile fundraisers - organized by the Republican nominee's national finance director - have drawn more than \$14 million. They do not violate campaign finance laws, according to legal experts. Nor is the campaign allowed to pocket any proceeds for its own political ends; a GoFundMe spokesperson said that the majority of the Butler, Pennsylvania funds have been disbursed.

But the use of a crowdfunding platform marks an unorthodox response to crises from a political campaign. Never before has a major party's presidential candidate turned to the for-profit company - which usually features desperate appeals for help covering tuition costs or medical bills - to mobilize their base toward outside charitable causes.

"It's pretty unusual and actually quite odd," said Brett Kappel, a longtime campaign finance attorney with Harmon Curran who has advised both Republicans and Democrats.

It's more typical to see candidates contribute campaign funds to IRS-approved nonprofits during natural disasters, Kappel said. He pointed to Federal Election Commission filings that show U.S. Sen. Tim Scott's 2022 campaign gave to the American Red Cross after Hurricane Ian hit South Carolina.

Trump campaign spokesperson Brian Hughes said the motivation arose from "the president wanting to help find a way for his supporters to give as much direct support as they can."

FEMA workers change some hurricane-recovery efforts in North Carolina after receiving threats

The finance team only got involved because of their "great expertise in working with large accounts," according to Hughes, and "not one penny of this funding is going anywhere but to those impacted." Hughes said more than \$6.5 million of the \$7.7 million raised for organizations helping with Hurricane Helene recovery had been disbursed as of Oct. 11.

"The president has an amazing movement of supporters," Hughes said. "With the experience in Butler generating millions of dollars of support, he saw the same opportunity to be a direct conduit for a philanthropic effort from his supporters."

Longtime Trump associates, conservative celebrities and right-wing groups gave tens of thousands of dollars. Bill Ackman, the CEO of the Pershing Square investment firm who endorsed Trump shortly after the assassination attempt, donated \$100,000 for hurricane relief. UFC President Dana White also pitched in \$100,000. Republican U.S. Sen. Rick Scott said on X that he donated \$50,000 from his congressional salary for the Butler, Pennsylvania victims. Also contributing was The Heritage Foundation, the conservative think tank behind Project 2025.

GoFundMe collects a transaction fee of 2.9% plus 30 cents for every donation to cover credit and debit charges. Its global Trust & Safety team has been communicating closely with organizer Meredith O'Rourke to ensure the safe distribution of donations from the Butler, Pennsylvania, page, according to a company spokesperson. O'Rourke

also provided a verified distribution plan, the GoFundMe spokesperson told AP, which the company routinely requires in cases where organizers are withdrawing money on behalf of other recipients.

It's not advisable for campaign finance officials to run crowdfunding pages "at the same time they were writing your money for your camp," according to Andrew Herman, a Washington lawyer specializing in campaign finance.

Because online crowdfunding is less regulated, he said, it would've been "more palatable" to direct supporters toward a recognized nonprofit.

"But people get into trouble when they try to ascribe rationality or any degree of what we would generally consider best financial practices to campaigns," Herman said.

"There's no black letter law that says they can't do this," he added. "Should they? Of course not."

The bulk of the Pennsylvania disbursements were made earlier this month and more payouts will come while the page remains active, according to Hughes. The "vast majority" has gone to the families of the three people shot, he said. Some funds also compensated a local crane rental company after the owner said he lost business when the ensuing police investigation left him unable to retrieve equipment he'd donated for the rally.

Money raised for Hurricane Helene victims has gone to four nonprofits. Samaritan's Purse spokesperson Gabrielle Bouquet said the Christian humanitarian aid organization is grateful for Trump's "steadfast support of the work we do in Jesus' name." Bouquet declined to share the exact amount of the donation.

Water Mission, a Christian engineering nonprofit that builds safe water solutions in disaster areas, confirmed that the Charleston-based ministry had also received funds. Public relations director Gregg Dinino did not specify the total.

Mtn2Sea Ministries, which delivers generators and supplies in the immediate aftermath of weather events, said on Facebook that it received \$25,000 on Monday. The disaster relief group posted that the proceeds were used to buy South Georgia businesses' gift cards because "the best way to help those in need is to get resources directly into their hands."

Pennsylvania town grapples with Trump assassination attempt ahead of his return

It makes sense that Trump's team gravitated toward crowdfunding, said Benjamin Soskis of the Urban Institute's Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy. The campaign "has often been premised on a suspicion of institutions," he said.

But crowdfunding also brings less accountability, Soskis said. Crowdfunding pages don't have the same disclosure requirements as public charities that must divulge their finances in annual tax filings.

Soskis said Trump's checkered philanthropic ventures have likely brought increased levels of scrutiny. A judge fined Trump \$2 million in 2019 for using his since-dissolved charitable foundation to advance his interests.

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# Hurricane Milton offers a catastrophic reminder - Eugene Robinson: Storms and climate: 'I can't even find the right adjective'

October 16, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Section: A | 784 Words Page: 9 OpenURL Link

Less than two weeks ago, Hurricane Helene ravaged southern Appalachia with unprecedented floods and claimed hundreds of lives. Now Hurricane Milton has targeted the west coast of Florida, which is still cleaning up from Helene's glancing blow. And less than a month from now, voters will choose between Democrats who accept the reality of climate change and Republicans who do not.

These are not the "normal" hurricanes of the past. Hurricanes are not supposed to retain catastrophic power as they race far inland from the Gulf of Mexico, dumping a Noah's flood of rainfall all the way to Tennessee, the way Helene did. Hurricanes are not supposed to grow from newly formed tropical storm to Category 5 monster in less than two days, the way Milton did - intensification so lightning-fast that it stunned experts.

"I can't even find the right adjective," University of Pennsylvania climate scientist Michael Mann said Monday about Milton. And Mann - author of the famous "hockey stick" graph showing the human-induced rise in global temperatures - pointed me to a Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory rapid-attribution study reporting that rainfall from Helene was boosted 50% by climate change.

Understanding why hurricanes now behave differently is a matter of "basic physics," Mann said. Warmer temperatures provide more energy and moisture to serve as fuel for hurricanes, making them bigger and wetter. It's not that there are more hurricanes. Rather, the ones that do form tend to be stronger and release much more rain. Counting Helene, the United States has seen eight Category 4 or Category 5 landfalls since 2017 - the same number as during the previous 57 years.

Milton could make it nine, though forecasters expected the storm to diminish slightly in wind speed before it lands. Another impact of climate change - roughly half a foot of sea level rise in the Gulf since 2010 - makes storm surge and coastal flooding much worse. Residents of low-lying areas in the Tampa Bay area have been told to leave their homes, and Tampa Mayor Jane Castor announced bluntly: "If you choose to stay in one of those evacuation areas, you're going to die."

Many Republicans are reluctant even to acknowledge climate change, much less do anything about it, because of politics, not physics.

Four of the states that suffered fatalities and major damage from Helene - Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee - have Republican governors and legislative majorities. Given all the death and destruction, you might think those officials would be clamoring for urgent action.

But the GOP's unchallenged leader, Donald Trump, has famously called climate change a "hoax" and frequently rails against clean-energy power sources such as solar and wind. He says he would dismantle the tax credits and incentives that encourage moving away from fossil fuels, vowing that his energy policy would be "drill, baby, drill."

His running mate, Sen. JD Vance of Ohio refused to give a straight answer when asked on the debate stage if he agrees climate change is a hoax. Nonsensically, he reasons - or pretends to reason - that even if carbon emissions are causing the planet to warm and making weather events more extreme, this somehow means the United States should extract more oil and natural gas, not less.

Not all MAGA-cult Republicans are as clueless as Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene of Georgia, who offered a

hallucinatory conspiracy theory to explain the storm, posting on X: "Yes they can control the weather. It's ridiculous for anyone to lie and say it can't be done." Yeesh.

A Pew Research Center poll in March found that only 12% of Republicans and Republican-leaning respondents believed climate change should be a "top priority" for the president and Congress, as opposed to 59% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents who felt that way.

But In a July 2023 poll, The Washington Post found that 55% of Republicans and GOP-leaning independents believed that human activity is "causing changes to the world's climate, including an increase in average temperature." That is far less than the 93% of Democrats and Democratic-leaning independents who believe in climate change, but it's still a majority.

Those numbers suggest that Republican voters might be prepared to support policies to mitigate and adapt to climate change if the party's leaders proposed them. But GOP elected officials must take their cues from Trump, lest he turn on them. Reality is no match for MAGA dogma.

Meanwhile, Helene and Milton and the supercharged hurricanes that will follow do not care whether the states they plow through are red or blue. Nor do the droughts, the wildfires or the punishing heat waves.

Whether we like it or not, climate change is an area of common ground: We're all in this together.

Eugene Robinson writes for The Washington Post: eugenerobinson@washpost.com.

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# Maker of IV fluids adjusts to west N.C. damage - Baxter expands global product sourcing, more than 1,000 employees are back

October 16, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC)

Author: RICHARD CRAVER Staff Reporter | Section: A | 531 Words

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Baxter International Inc. said Monday it has started sourcing IV fluids and peritoneal dialysis (PD) solutions from its global resources as it continues to assess the damages to its Marion manufacturing plant.

Baxter is the largest U.S. manufacturer of these solutions.

Baxter said it will use air and other methods of transportation "to get products to the U.S. as quickly as we are able" from its seven global plants.

The Food and Drug Administration announced Oct. 9 it has authorized temporary importation for five Baxter manufacturing facilities in Canada, China (two sites), Ireland and the United Kingdom.

"Temporary importation authorization across these sites includes 19 IV solution and dialysis product codes," the manufacturer said. "We are working closely with FDA to authorize temporary importation for additional Baxter manufacturing sites and products, which could provide additional inventory in the near term.

The North Cove manufacturing plant experienced significant flooding damage from the remnants of Hurricane Helene. The Marion campus remains closed for production.

It is Baxter's largest manufacturing facility with more than 2,500 employees.

"Our goal is to begin restarting North Cove production in phases by the end of this year," the company said in a news release. "We do not yet have a timeline for when we expect production to be fully restored to pre-hurricane levels."

Baxter said it has brought more than 1,000 employees back to work to contribute to cleanup and recovery efforts, as well as having about 1,000 remediation contractors on site.

"This week, we expect to have 3,000 people contributing to recovery efforts - with nearly two-thirds of those being Baxter employees," the manufacturer said.

"We also continued to serve 100-plus colleagues every day at our employee support center, where we offer food, water and toiletries, as well as access to showers, laundry facilities, computers and generators. Many of our employees still don't have access to power."

Baxter said the current cleanup and recovery priorities remain completing deep cleaning of the facility, including floors and equipment, as well as assessing the status of all equipment and production lines.

The recovery efforts are benefiting from a second temporary bridge at the site that is allowing additional truck and equipment traffic.

Baxter said it has transported more than 350 truckloads of finished product off site and is beginning shipments to customers.

"Our goal remains to return to 90% to 100% allocation of certain IV solution product codes by the end of 2024,"

Baxter said.

"We have requested that healthcare professionals limit new PD patient starts to pediatric patients (those under 18 years old) and other medically necessary patient exceptions may be considered.

"While our priority is to ensure our existing patients and customers get the supplies they need, we are looking for every opportunity to expand our support to address new patients as we progress toward recovery."

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# Dead factory worker's family sues the company - Dead factory worker's family sues the company

October 16, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Author: Associated Press | Section: A | 176 Words Page: 7 OpenURL Link

NASHVILLE, Tenn. - The family of a Tennessee employee who was killed by catastrophic flooding caused by Hurricane Helene filed a wrongful death lawsuit against the company he worked for, arguing that workers were forced to stay at their posts even when managers knew conditions were becoming dangerous.

Johnny Peterson was among the Impact Plastics employees who died Sept. 27 after Helene's flooding hit Erwin, a small, rural town in eastern Tennessee.

Many of the surviving employees stated they were not allowed to leave the plant in time to avoid the storm's impact. Instead, it wasn't until water flooded the plant's parking lot and the power went out that managers sent workers home.

The raging waters swept 11 people away and only five were rescued. Two of them are confirmed dead and are part of a toll across six states that is nearly 250 dead. Four others from the factory are still missing.

The suit, filed Monday, names Impact Plastics and company owner Gerald O'Connor as defendants. O'Connor's attorney did not immediately respond to an email requesting comment Tuesday.

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Associated Press, 'Dead factory worker's family sues the company Dead factory worker's family sues the company', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 16 Oct 2024 7 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a> p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C3E46856242EB0>



#### Moose Cafe closed for renovations - Moose Cafe closed for renovations in Colfax

October 16, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Author: MICHAEL HASTINGS Staff Reporter | Section: B | 181 Words Page: 7 OpenURL Link

Moose Café, at 2914 Sandy Ridge Road on the grounds of the Piedmont Triad Farmers Market in Colfax, closed Sept. 27 for renovations.

The cafe's website doesn't give many specifics on the work being done, but says it is expected to take 13 to 15 months.

The website does say that the renovations will result in a "completely reimagined dining experience" of the outdoor and indoor dining areas as well as expanded food and beverage offerings.

A second Moose Café is in Asheville on the grounds of the Western Carolina Farmers Market. That café also is closed for the foreseeable future as a result of the damage the city recently sustained from Hurricane Helene.

For more information, visit eatatthemoosecafe.com.

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MICHAEL HASTINGS; Staff Reporter, 'Moose Cafe closed for renovations Moose Cafe closed for renovations in Colfax', *Winston-Salem Journal* (online), 16 Oct 2024 7 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?</a>
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#### THE READERS' FORUM - Wednesday's letters: How could anyone vote for Mark Robinson?

October 16, 2024 | Winston-Salem Journal (NC) Section: A | 810 Words Page: 9 OpenURL Link

Wednesday's letters: How could anyone vote for Mark Robinson?

Never should he win

How on earth could anyone with even an ounce of common sense defend Mark Robinson in light of all the many sexist (and other) comments he has made. I personally have heard some of them, and, according to a CNN report, he allegedly has made others that are even worse.

Women especially should be appalled at the comments he has made concerning them. I hope all of you will remember them when you go to vote.

Robinson has denied everything (of course he has!) in the CNN story and says the evidence doesn't add up.

He has hired Binnall Law Group to investigate "the outrageous lies from CNN's latest smear," according to a statement by the Robinson campaign. It's going to be interesting to see what they come up with.

It should make anyone shudder to even think of Robinson becoming governor of our state. I cannot in my wildest imagination see him representing us.

We all need to be protected from the likes of this man - he should never be governor. Please vote for Josh Stein for governor of North Carolina.

Wilma Cook

Winston-Salem

Despicably shameful

Donald Trump is one despicable human being. He has proven it again by politicizing the federal government's response to the devastation caused by Hurricane Helene.

Trump posted on social media that the federal government is not helping people in Republican areas and that FEMA does not have enough money to respond to the devastation because money has been diverted to provide money to house migrants.

These lies are believed and reposted on social media by his supporters and have caused some people to not apply for aid. Even worse, FEMA workers are being threatened.

Playing political football with a national disaster is despicably shameful. Trump, of course, has a history of doing despicably shameful things. Who can ever forget Trump watching his thugs destroying the Capitol on Jan. 6 and not caring that police officers were getting attacked and not caring that his vice president was being threatened to be hanged.

Who can ever forget the heart-wrenching screams of infants being taken from their parents because Trump thought this was a way to handle the immigration problem? And how despicable is it to call our brave servicemen "suckers

and losers"? There's more. in a new revelation by Bob Woodward, Trump sent his friend Vladimir Putin scarce COVID test kits for his personal use during the height of the epidemic.

It is no wonder that many of his former advisers are saying that Trump is unfit for any office. Please heed their advice when you vote.

**Rudy Diamond** 

Lewisville

Inappropriate timing

I'm no Middle East expert, but it seems to me totally reasonable that Wake Forest cancelled the pro-Palestinian speaker on the anniversary of Oct. 7 at the request of Jewish students and their supporters. Wouldn't we all be offended at a pro-al-Qaida speaker on 9/11? (I suspect the anti-American "colonist/capitalist/settler/oppressor" talking points would be very similar.)

I'm not opposed to free speech, debate and dialogue. But context matters.

Laura Allen

Advance

Trump's troubling policies

Donald Trump's package of policies that call for deporting millions of people from the United States, imposing 20% across-the-board tariffs combined with a 60% tariff on China, and eroding the Federal Reserve's political independence would damage the U.S. economy more than that of the nations he wants to punish.

Recent studies from the Peterson Institute for International Economics (PIIE) show that Trump's tariffs alone would cost a typical, middle-income U.S. household \$1,700 a year. They would hurt the poor more because they spend much of their money on groceries, clothing and other consumer items that would cost more, thanks to the higher tariffs.

When combined with his deportation policy, PIIE estimates that a scenario in which the United States deports 8.3 million people and other countries retaliate with higher tariffs of their own would result in prices rising 9.3% by 2026 and a decline in employment of 9% by 2028.

Higher tariffs will hit the automotive and energy sectors the worst and make U.S. exports, including agricultural products, less competitive internationally.

Finally, when the deportation is over, the farming and construction, health care, educational and health services industries, which depend heavily on migrants, would face acute labor shortages.

Trump has made wild claims and promises at his campaign events that he cannot keep in an effort to recapture the presidency. Americans, especially the younger generation and minorities, cannot afford the trade war and the economic harm to our families that Trump's policies would unleash.

Tim Miles

Mount Airy

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#### Early voting begins Thursday

October 16, 2024 | Yadkin Ripple, The (Yadkinville, NC) Author: Staff Report | Section: News | 828 Words OpenURL Link

Early voting begins in Yadkin County and around the state on Thursday. The early voting poling site will be at the Yadkin County Board of Elections Office located at 1300 Unifi Industrial Rd., Yadkinville. Curbside Voting will be available each day of early voting as well. Hours for the early voting site will be 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Oct. 17-19, Oct. 21-26, Oct. 28-Nov. 1 and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Nov. 2. Election day is Tuesday, Nov. 5 with local poling sites open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.

Statewide, 419 early voting sites will open on Thursday across North Carolina.

"In-person early voting has been the most popular method of voting in recent general elections, and we expect that will continue in 2024," said Karen Brinson Bell, executive director of the State Board of Elections.

In 2020, 65% of North Carolina voters chose in-person early voting as their voting method. And in the presidential election of 2016, 62% of NC voters cast their ballot early.

The following are 10 tips for voters as early voting begins:

Early voting locations. Eligible voters may cast a ballot at any early voting site in their county. For sites and hours in all 100 counties, use the Early Voting Sites Search tool. Also see Early Voting Sites for the November 5, 2024 General Election (PDF). The busiest days for early voting are often the first day and the last couple of days.

Candidate info. Sample ballots are available through the Voter Search tool. For information on candidates for the state Supreme Court and Court of Appeals, see the State Board's Judicial Voter Guide: 2024 General Election. The Guide is also being mailed to all NC households. Election officials do not provide information about candidates for other contests, but some media outlets and advocacy groups do. Many candidates also have websites and social media accounts. Being familiar with your ballot choices will help your voting experience go more smoothly.

Bring Your Photo ID. Voters will be asked to show photo ID when they check in to vote. Most voters will show their driver's license, but many other forms of photo ID will be accepted. Voters who do not have photo ID can meet the photo ID requirement by either (1) filling out a form explaining why they are unable to show ID, or (2) showing their ID at the county board of elections office by 5 p.m. November 14. More information about the photo ID requirement is available at BringItNC.gov.

Free Photo IDs. Any registered voter who needs a photo ID can get one for free from their county board of elections office during the early voting period, which ends on November 2. For details, go to Get a Free Voter Photo ID.

Register to Vote. The regular voter registration deadline was October 11. But any North Carolinian who is eligible to vote may still register and vote during the early voting period. Registrants must provide proof of their residence address, which can be a driver's license or other government document, paycheck, utility bill, or bank statement. For more information, visit Register in Person During Early Voting.

Updating Registration. During early voting, registered voters may update their name or address within the same county, if necessary.

Absentee Ballot Drop-off. Voters who vote by absentee ballot can return it by mail or hand it to an election official at an early voting site in their county. They can also drop it off in person to their county board of elections office. Voters registered in the 25 counties in the Helene disaster area in Western North Carolina may return their

absentee ballot to any early voting site in the state during early voting hours. Ballots will be kept secure and delivered to the voter's county board of elections for processing. For more information on returning absentee-by-mail ballots, see Detailed Instructions to Vote By Mail.

Voting in Person Instead of Absentee. Voters who requested an absentee ballot but have not yet returned it may choose instead to vote in person during the early voting period or on Election Day, November 5. Voters may discard the absentee ballot and do not need to bring it to a voting site.

Peace at the Polls. All voters should respect the rights of others to participate in the election. Election officials are trained to quickly address incidents that might interfere with a voter's ability to cast their ballot. Intimidating any voter is a crime. Voters who feel harassed or intimidated should notify an election official immediately.

Voters in Need of Assistance. Voters in need of assistance may bring an eligible person to help them enter and exit the polling place or to help them complete their ballot according to the voter's instructions. Election officials are also available to help voters. Curbside voting is also available for voters unable to enter the voting site. For more information, visit Curbside Voting.

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Staff Report, 'Early voting begins Thursday', *Yadkin Ripple, The* (online), 16 Oct 2024 <a href="https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C4039961FB2860">https://infoweb.newsbank.com/apps/news/document-view?p=AMNEWS&docref=news/19C4039961FB2860</a>



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