



*VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE AND
CONSUMER SERVICES*

*Virginia Farm
Recovery Block Grant
Program (VFRG):
Hurricane Helene
Disaster Assistance*

UPDATED: APRIL 23, 2026

Overview of Block Grant

- ▶ The Disaster Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2025
- ▶ Virginia requested nearly \$174 million
 - ▶ Based on damage estimates submitted by Virginia Cooperative Extension and Dept. of Forestry
- ▶ USDA awarded VDACS \$59,566,198 for payment to eligible producers
- ▶ 35% of requested amount
- ▶ Award also includes funds for administration
- ▶ VDACS initial application period closed Nov 6, 2025
- ▶ Approx 495 Applications

Eligibility

- ▶ Any producer that applied for program benefits during the initial enrollment period, regardless of payment eligibility, may not reapply during the subsequent round
- ▶ Damage occurred in eligible locality
 - ▶ Counties of Bedford, Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Craig, Dickenson, Floyd, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Montgomery, Patrick, Pittsylvania, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, Wythe, and the independent cities of Bristol, Covington, Danville, Galax, Norton, and Radford
- ▶ Eligible loss categories
 - ▶ Timber
 - ▶ Farm Infrastructure
 - ▶ Future Economic Loss
 - ▶ Market Loss
 - ▶ Plasticulture

Eligibility

- ▶ Eligible producer
 - ▶ Producer located in an eligible locality that suffered an eligible loss as a direct result of Hurricane Helene and had an ownership share and a production risk in the crop, livestock, or timber (including timber rights). In addition, an Eligible Producer is a person or legal entity that must be a:
 - ▶ Citizen of the United States;
 - ▶ Resident alien; for purposes of this part, resident alien means “lawful alien” as defined in 7 CFR part 1400;
 - ▶ Partnership consisting solely of citizens or resident aliens of the United States;
 - ▶ Corporation, limited liability corporation, or other farm organizational structure organized under State law consisting solely of citizens or resident aliens of the United States; or
 - ▶ Indian Tribe or Tribal organization, as defined in section 4(b) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304)

Eligibility

- ▶ For farm / agricultural losses, the Eligible Producer must demonstrate that they have been engaged in commercial agricultural activity
 - ▶ FSA farm number(s)
 - ▶ Schedule F
 - ▶ Other documentation demonstrating at least \$1,000 in annual agricultural sales
- ▶ Timber owner
 - ▶ At least 10 contiguous acres of timber on the property / tract
 - ▶ Timber intended for commercial harvest

Eligibility

- ▶ Claims may not be made to VFRG for losses that are covered or are eligible under any other USDA insurance or disaster recovery program
- ▶ Evidence that links certain losses to a crop or livestock that was present within 12 months of Helene
- ▶ Amount of private insurance payment / settlement for any item or category eligible under VFRG must be deducted during the application process
 - ▶ Settlements or insurance payments must be itemized and assigned to specific infrastructure
 - ▶ Any compensation received by the owner for damaged timber salvaged after the storm up to the time of application must be deducted from timber loss payment

Eligibility

- ▶ Agree to Linkage Requirement for certain losses
 - ▶ Eligible Producers who receive Relief Fund payments must obtain Federal Crop Insurance for all insurable crops (including aquaculture), trees, bushes, or vines, which they have received payment due to aquaculture infrastructure, future economic, market, or plasticulture losses at the 60/100 level of coverage (or equivalent) where insurance is available. Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) at the 60 percent level may also be purchased. Where Federal crop insurance is not available, Eligible Producers who receive Relief Fund payments are required to purchase NAP coverage at the 60/100 level of coverage (or equivalent).
- ▶ Linkage applies to claims for
 - ▶ Market loss
 - ▶ Future economic loss
 - ▶ Aquaculture
 - ▶ Plasticulture

Evidence of Loss

- ▶ Multiple forms of evidence or documentation may be needed to support each loss claimed
- ▶ Photographic evidence following Helene
- ▶ Paperwork from insurance settlement
- ▶ Itemized and detailed quotes or invoices from contractors for repair, replacement, demolition
- ▶ Letter from Cooperative Extension representative with detailed and specific knowledge of individual loss
- ▶ Timber loss will be accomplished by Virginia Dept. of Forestry using GIS data
- ▶ Other forms of documentation may be considered

Timber Loss

- ▶ Owner of the timber or timber rights at the time of Helene
- ▶ Minimum 10 contiguous acres under same ownership of which a moderate, severe, or very severe level of timber damage occurred on at least one acre of that ownership
- ▶ The land must have had tree cover immediately before Hurricane Helene

Infrastructure Loss

- ▶ On-farm building structures
 - ▶ Barns, pole barns, greenhouses, packing houses, silos, etc.
 - ▶ At least 15% damage or destruction
 - ▶ Evidence that commodities or livestock were present within the 12 months prior to Hurricane Helene
 - ▶ Ineligible structures include, but are not limited to, equipment buildings, repair shops, and movable equipment
- ▶ Above ground irrigation
 - ▶ Crop was grown under the structure within 12 months prior to storm
 - ▶ At least 15% damage or destruction
 - ▶ Ineligible structures include, but are not limited to pumps, wells, and irrigation infrastructure underground

Infrastructure Loss

- ▶ Aquaculture infrastructure
 - ▶ Eligible infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, tanks, docks, breeding houses, and cages
 - ▶ At least 15% damage or destruction
 - ▶ Evidence that aquaculture was present within 12 months prior to Hurricane Helene
 - ▶ Ineligible structures include, but are not limited to, boats and any equipment that is easily movable
 - ▶ The producer must obtain crop insurance or NAP coverage for certain future crop years
- ▶ On-farm roads, bridges, and culverts
 - ▶ Evidence that eligible roads, bridges, and culverts must provide direct access to farm production and be located on the farm
 - ▶ Must have suffered a complete washout and been made impassable or nearly impassable
 - ▶ Roads, bridges, and culverts located on forest land are not eligible

Future Economic Loss

- ▶ Perennial crop (Christmas trees, apple trees, blueberry bushes, etc.)
- ▶ The producer must have experienced a loss of at least 5% in a production area due to Hurricane Helene
- ▶ The producer must obtain crop insurance or NAP coverage for certain future crop years
- ▶ The producer must replant the crop type for which the loss is being claimed

Market Loss

- ▶ The crop must have been produced but spoiled or was discarded before or after harvesting due to a lack of market availability. Crop loss was directly related to loss of market
 - ▶ Example: A trailer load of pumpkins destined for a grocery store in Asheville rotted because the grocery store was damaged and unreachable following Helene
- ▶ Losses not directly related to the sale of a crop (e.g., corn maze, hayride) are not eligible
- ▶ Eligible producer had to grow the crop
- ▶ The producer must obtain crop insurance or NAP coverage for certain future crop years

Plasticulture

- ▶ Plastic covering and materials used to prevent the growth of weeds and protect plants were damaged by Hurricane Helene
- ▶ Crop itself not eligible
- ▶ The producer must obtain crop insurance or NAP coverage for certain future crop years

Navigating in WebGrants

- ▶ Applicants must register and receive a password before completing an application
- ▶ An applicant will need to submit a substitute W-9 during registration
- ▶ If an applicant intends to submit losses for more than one business entity they may either:
 - ▶ Use different email addresses to register each account
 - ▶ Work with VDACS supply a W-9 and business formation documentation for each business entity.
- ▶ An application is needed for each locality where losses are claimed
 - ▶ This is to simplify the verification process used by VDACS, VCE and Dept. of Forestry.
- ▶ Follow prompts and job aids for each section
- ▶ Note: Grant funds are considered taxable income per USDA and recipients will be issued a 1099

Timeline

- ▶ Registration is open
- ▶ Application window opened April 27, 2026
- ▶ Application window closes on July 1, 2026
- ▶ Review and validation process
 - ▶ Applicant set up in COV system (per W-9)
 - ▶ Initial review by VDACS
 - ▶ Validation by VCE and DOF
 - ▶ Final review and approval by VDACS
- ▶ If more claims received than funding, claim amounts adjusted based on a universal reduction factor applied to all claims
- ▶ Approved claims transmitted electronically to Department of Accounts for payment
- ▶ Applicants will receive a 1099 per federal guidance

For Assistance

- ▶ www.VDACS.Virginia.gov
- ▶ DisasterRecoveryGrants@vdacs.virginia.gov
- ▶ Local Cooperative Extension Office
- ▶ Toll-Free: 1.833.469.5037
- ▶ Phone: 1.804.225.3924