

Contractor Guidance

Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems (DWTS) (Septic Systems) Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Helene Decentralized Funding

Last updated September 2026

The American Relief Act, 2025 (PL 118-158) includes the State Revolving Fund Supplemental Appropriations for Hurricanes Helene and Milton and the Hawai'i Wildfires that support decentralized wastewater treatment systems (DWTS) through the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality's (DEQ's) Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Hurricane Helene Decentralized Funding. These projects require compliance with federal and North Carolina regulations. The purpose of this guidance document is to provide additional information to prospective contractors regarding certain federal eligibility requirements for the program.

Purpose

This guidance is meant to help contractors understand the eligibility factors and resiliency measures required for performing work at project sites funded through DEQ's CWSRF Hurricane Helene Decentralized Funding. Contractors must adhere to these requirements and all other contractual requirements issued by the CWSRF Hurricane Helene Decentralized Funding Awardee for project work to be reimbursable. Contractors should work closely with the Awardee to understand all contract terms and conditions.

Federal Requirements

Work may not begin at an address until the Awardee has received DEQ approval to proceed with work at that address.

Project Eligibility Factors

- **Geographic location:** The project location must be within one of the 39 FEMA-designated counties impacted by Hurricane Helene ([see this map for official disaster declaration](#)).
- **Hurricane Helene damage documentation:** All systems in need of repair are eligible. Fifty percent of all projects funded must have verifiable Helene damage documentation, unless otherwise approved in Awardees' application.
- **Resilience measures:** All resiliency measures must be identified, implemented, and documented for all funded projects to show how the project reduces future flood risk or increases resilience to future flooding. Resiliency measures must be incorporated and documented for all projects. (See Project Resiliency Measures section, below.)

- **Permitting:** The applicable pre-construction permit documentation must be in place. If a pre-construction permit is not required to repair damage, please discuss with DEQ.

Contractor and General Payment Eligibility Requirements

- Qualified contractor pool: Contractors performing CWSRF Hurricane Helene Decentralized Funding septic repair or replacement work must be selected through the Awardee's Request for Qualifications (RFQ) or qualified contractor pool process.
- Contractors and subcontractors must not be suspended or debarred from participating in federal assistance programs. Awardees must screen and document contractors consistent with [suspension](#) and [debarment](#) requirements, including [Executive Order 12549](#), [2 CFR Part 180](#), and [2 CFR Part 1532](#).
- Contractors must submit a quote to the Awardee in accordance with the terms of their contract with the Awardee. All change orders are subject to fiscal review and approval by the Awardee.
- In addition to providing documentation of the project resiliency measures, contractors must take photos of each site and its relevant resiliency measure during work and after completion of work and submit the photos to the Awardee to verify the resiliency measure was included. If the property owner has Hurricane Helene damage, their photos of the damaged system can also be submitted.

Project Resiliency Measures

All DWTS projects receiving CWSRF Helene Decentralized Funding must use those funds "to improve the resilience of decentralized wastewater treatment systems to flooding, to assess the potential to connect homes served by decentralized wastewater treatment systems to centralized wastewater systems, and to fund such connections."¹ As such, projects must add resiliency components to protect against future flooding, rapid hydraulic change, and landslides (e.g., flood-induced damages) to be eligible for this funding.

For the full list of resiliency measures, and other resources please visit <https://www.deq.nc.gov/clean-water-state-revolving-fund-cwsrf-helene-decentralized-wastewater-treatment-systems-septic>.

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2025-03/sa-hmw-implementation-memorandum.pdf>