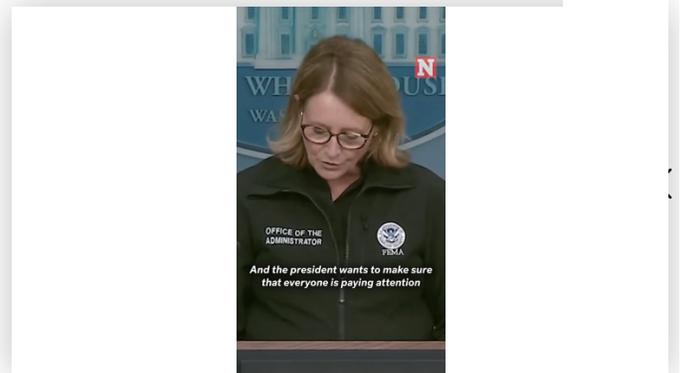


Fact Check: Did Biden-Harris Migrant Spending Drain FEMA Hurricane Budget?

Published Oct 04, 2024 at 2:33 PM EDT

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By [Billal Rahman AND Dan Gooding](#)

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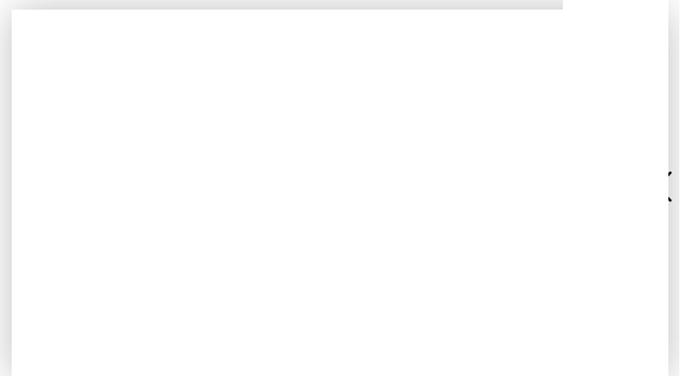
Former President [Donald Trump](#)'s campaign doubled down Friday on claims that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) had [run out of money to help](#) those hit by [Hurricane Helene](#) because of [the Biden administration's spending on services for migrants](#).

The concerns about FEMA's cash flow came after Homeland Security Secretary [Alejandro Mayorkas](#) said on Wednesday that the agency would struggle for funding for the rest of the hurricane season.

Republicans, including Texas Governor [Greg Abbott](#), then claimed that over \$640 million had been spent by FEMA on migrants when it could have been used to plug the funding gap.

Stephen Miller, a Trump surrogate and the mastermind behind his immigration policy, said on [Fox News](#) that FEMA spending money on migrants is "the gravest betrayal this country has ever seen." [Fox](#) News contributor Tammy Bruce also reiterated the claims in a social media post.

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Further claims were made that FEMA was actively taking supplies and donations from volunteers and other organizations trying to help.

The [Department of Homeland Security](#) and FEMA have [denied the claims](#).



Former President Donald Trump's campaign doubled down Friday

The idea that FEMA funding had run low because of spending on immigrants began on X, with the Trump campaign making the same claim to *Newsweek* Friday.

"FEMA has run out of money for the rest of hurricane season because [Kamala Harris](#) used the funds for free giveaways to illegal immigrants. This is inexcusable and yet another example of Kamala Harris putting Americans LAST!" Karoline Leavitt, Trump Campaign National Press Secretary, said in an emailed statement.

Newsweek has contacted the Harris campaign for comment in response to the allegations made by the Trump campaign.

The Facts

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which had a budget of that amount for Fiscal Year 2024, which ended on September 30.

SSP allocates funds to migrant support groups, nonprofits, and state and local governments to distribute to those in need of shelter, food or medical care.

While the [funds are distributed by FEMA](#), they do not come from the agency's budget.

The [DHS Appropriations Act 2024](#) shows that the money is from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) budget, which is then given to FEMA to hand out, "helping to facilitate the safe, orderly, and humane release of asylum seekers and families".

CBP influences where the cash is spent, with a requirement to send operational data to FEMA on a quarterly basis. This data helps guide FEMA on where to allocate the funds, particularly to shelters that support CBP's border security mission.

The first wave of funding for 2024 came in April, with \$259.13 million allocated. Another round was announced late August.

Previous recipients of those funds include counties such as Pima County in Arizona, which received \$21.8 million, as well as smaller church ministry organizations with grants around \$10,000. CLOSE X

States along the border and elsewhere have previ
over 30 Texas organizations and local governmer



Flood waters inundate the main street after Hurricane Helene passed offshore on September 27, 2024 in Tarpon Springs, Florida. Hurricane Helene made landfall Thursday night in Florida's Big Bend with winds up to 140 mph... [More](#) **JOE RAEDLE/GETTY**

Mayorkas said there was enough money available for FEMA to meet the needs of [the communities impacted by Hurricane Helene](#), as he suggested that another storm would lead to problems.

"We are meeting the immediate needs with the money that we have," [Mayorkas told reporters](#) on Air Force One. "We are expecting another hurricane hitting. We do not have the funds. FEMA does not have the funds to make it through the season and what is imminent."

A spokesperson for DHS later told *Newsweek* that the claims made by the GOP were "completely false".

FEMA was forced to set up a page to address rumors about FEMA's response to Hurricane Helene, which has [killed at least 200 people](#) in rural Georgia and North Carolina.

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assistance, as there is a variety of help available for different needs.

For the new financial year, which began Oct. 1, FEMA laid out a need for \$33.1 billion. [Congress](#) then approved a temporary stopgap of \$20 billion as it sought to stop a government shutdown before going into recess.

That money does not meet the needs of the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), which lawmakers reportedly removed additional funding for in an attempt to get the stopgap through.

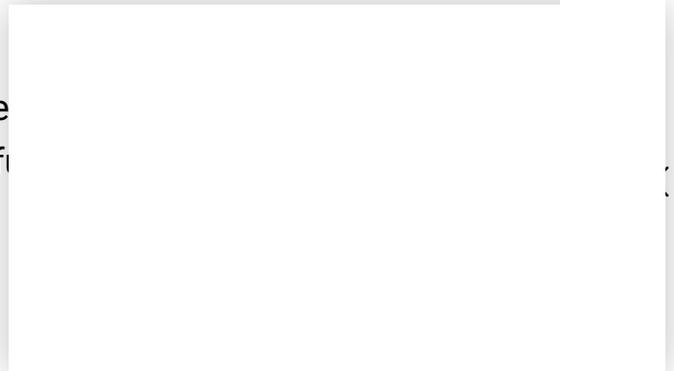


US Vice President Kamala Harris speaks to children as she hands out food at the Henry Brigham Community Center in Augusta, Georgia, on October 2, 2024. US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris...

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The DRF mostly covers costs of previous emergency...
FEMA also has the option to ask for emergency fi...



against the President's budget, but we're not out of hurricane season yet, so we need to keep a close eye on it," Jaclyn Rothenberg, a spokesperson for FEMA, told *Newsweek* Thursday afternoon. "We may need to go back into immediate needs funding and we will be watching it closely."

Is FEMA confiscating donations, equipment?

The agency also [set up another page](#), seeking to make it clear that it was not confiscating or taking commodities, supplies or resources in any of the states affected by the storm.

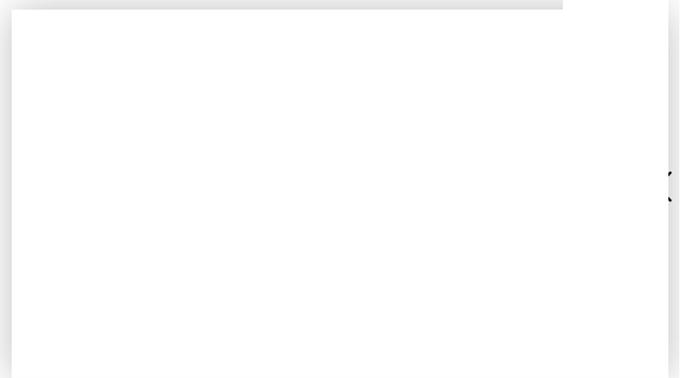
"FEMA is continuing to work with our federal family and state and local partners in the impacted areas to effectively bring in life-saving resources to the people and communities who need it most," Rothenberg said Friday afternoon.

Addressing [concerns raised by X owner Elon Musk](#), who posted that his Starlink hardware was being blocked by FEMA, the agency said it had provided several terminals across North Carolina for crucial communication.

"These units are supporting state and local municipalities, Urban Search and Rescue and disaster coordination," Rothenberg added. "Starlink units have been sent to multiple states in support of Hurricane Helene response efforts."

The Biden administration had already disbursed over \$10 million in "flexible and upfront" assistance to the states affected, FEMA said in a [press release](#).

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The federal relief agency had shipped over 8.8 million meals, more than 7.4 million liters of water, 150 generators, and more than 225,000 tarps to the storm zone, it said.

[Crews were also helping to restore power](#) and set up satellite internet links for those without service.

Over 1,600 interactions with people and animals, including rescues and evacuations, had also taken place with federal assistance.

President [Joe Biden](#) also said his administration would cover 100 percent of the costs for the first 180 days in Florida, Georgia, and North Carolina.

The Ruling

False.

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Update 10/04/24: This article has been updated to amend Tammy Bruce's title and add additional information from Jaclyn Rothenberg.

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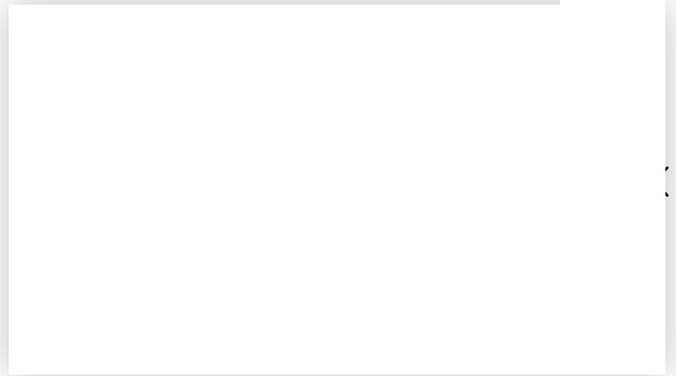
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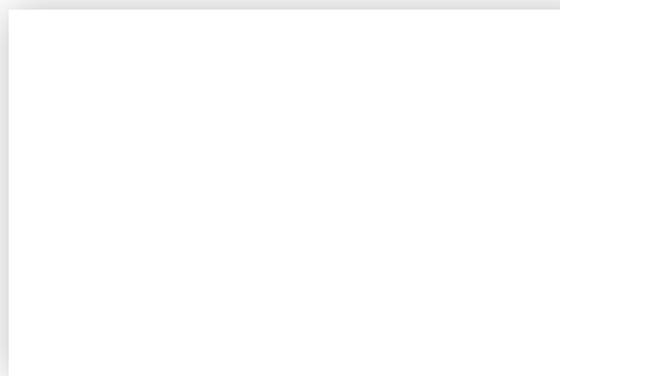
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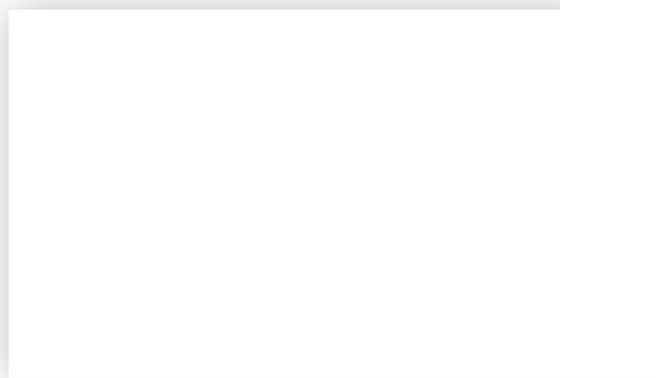
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About the writer

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Billal Rahman is a Live News reporter based in London, U.K. He specializes in foreign affairs and U.S. politics. He ... [read more](#)

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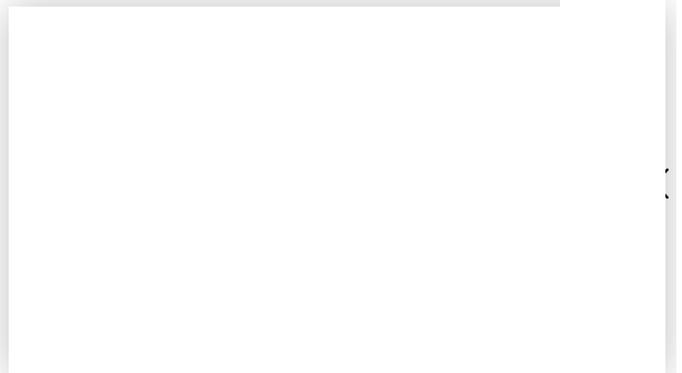
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supporting state and local municipalities, Urban Search and Rescue and disaster coordination," ...

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T Tubbs

5 October, 2024

The agencies all say things are being handled as well as can possibly be expected.

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Arandor Thinnorion

8 October, 2024

Exactly. They're only allowing "official" response efforts to have Starlink. The average person isn't allowed to use it. This is another example of the bureaucratic nonsense going on. It's also an example of, "We're the government, we have rights to things that you don't. Now be good sheep and get ...

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Matt Lechner

5 October, 2024

in total, the media has done a pretty good job of concealing the true costs of illegal immigration, and the Trump side is legitimately portraying those costs as of a domestic nature, and legitimately juxtaposing those costs with the lack of support to poor Southerners hit by Hurricane Helene. It i...

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DK Dr Kray

7 October, 2024

The Biden admin has not provided a 10th of what is needed. The devastation is vast and not being covered by the media. If it was being covered there would be a huge outcry by the public. In fact, the gov is hind from helping, attempting to stop privat...

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false. This will take time. And the Con's team can't do proper accounting- they are too prone to lying and skimming mone...

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Amanita Takeabite ...

4 October, 2024

Tremendous angry on the ground in Western North Carolina as people ask where is their government , where is FEMA! No food no water, no electricity, and **NO kamala 750 dollar "immediate needs" money APPLICATIONS!** **Count on losing North Carolina, Georgia** as word spreads that the harris/biden regim...

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E Elen ...

4 October, 2024

IF and ONLY IF these decimated rural areas are even able to vote within the next month. Consider that most of the areas destroyed by the hurricane are rural and southern, which equals predominantly Republican voters. If they are prevented by the disaster from voting in these narrowly-disputed swi...

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Terry Ward ...

4 October, 2024

No longer am I surprised at the stupendous lack of logic & critical thinking & the absence of simple *reason* inherent in the trumpenprole.
And their incessant lying just to get their way reminds me of my 5 yr. old nephew.
But trump did say he prefers the unintelligent
So there is that.
Do make sure y...

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The point is this administration is spending large amounts of money for wars and illegal immigrants who by our laws broke the law. We have laws already in place and this whole operation is Treasonous. This hurricane disaster is so huge it deserves a full military recovery and disaster relief. Katri...

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R Raymond ...

4 October, 2024

So why aren't we mad at congress for appropriating funds for wars? While Biden signed it, the funding came from congress. They have the power of the purse

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Kevin Ber ...

4 October, 2024

Republicans not funding the government is what caused this. Republicans control the house, they can release funding, but where is the bill?

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james pond ...

4 October, 2024

I love how Trump can say things everyone knows he can't possibly know, and they take it seriously.

He's not in the government now, and he didn't know what FEMA was when he was in the government.

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Trumpel Stiltzkin

5 October, 2024

You understand he was president for 4 years in those 4 years think maybe he has dealt with how it operates. Plus any idiot can simply u

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Michael Smith ...

5 October, 2024

I've already got people on my Facebook who believe the two lies he told. They just outright believe it. It's disgusting. This country won't be safe again until this man is behind bars.

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B bigcheezer ...

4 October, 2024

Also, FEMA could be "tapped" out cause the requests were bigger than usual: that the states **underfunded their own reserves** to handle hurricane emergencies? To add, hyped up the situation to get more FEMA money.

(Edited)

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Kevin Ber ...

4 October, 2024

The Republicans failing to fund the government before the election is what caused FEMA to run out of money, the same was true during the pandemic. Republicans don't like to be prepared. They also control the house and could Fund FEMA anytime they like. I'm just waiting on a funding bill.....I...

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Michael Smith ...

5 October, 2024

Yep, they whine when someone spends money, they whine when they don't. They whine. That's all they do. They complain about X, Y, Z, but don't do anything about it. I'm not voting for a concept of a plan, I'm vo

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politics. The country is coming together to support everyone, including his supporters. MTG attacking FEMA. The country is sic...

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D Dadood

...

5 October, 2024

Almost every MAGA in Congress, from the states the hurricane hit, voted against funding FEMA, but now that their states got blown up, they are trying to lay off their incompetence by blaming Democrats for their failures, again. The MAGA passed \$20 billion dollars for FEMA, but not without the democ...

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Angela Osborn

...

6 October, 2024

Out of \$20bn, they funded 150 generators and \$750 per person for food stamps. Why would we want \$160bn to go to the hands that couldn't manage \$20bn properly? Joe approved \$10million for the storm. Read that number again.

Often bills are struck down because of unrelated, unnecessary add-ons that c...

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Terry Ward

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5 October, 2024

they vote against that stuff so they can blame the Biden admin. for any bad things that happen.

(Edited)

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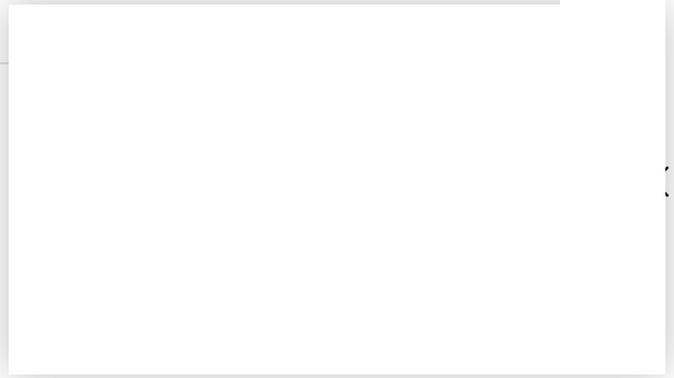
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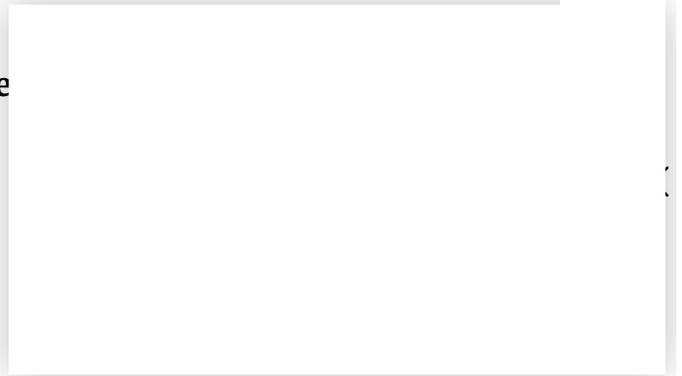
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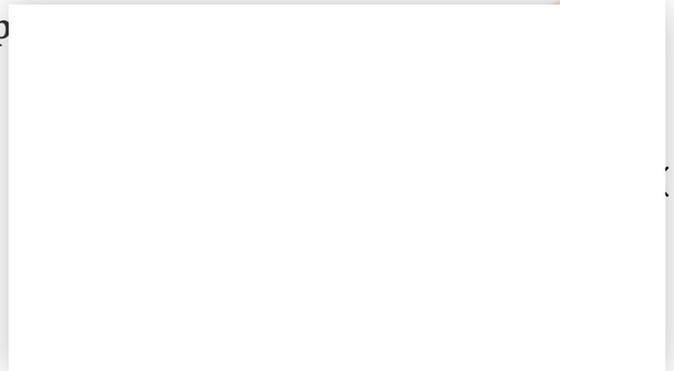
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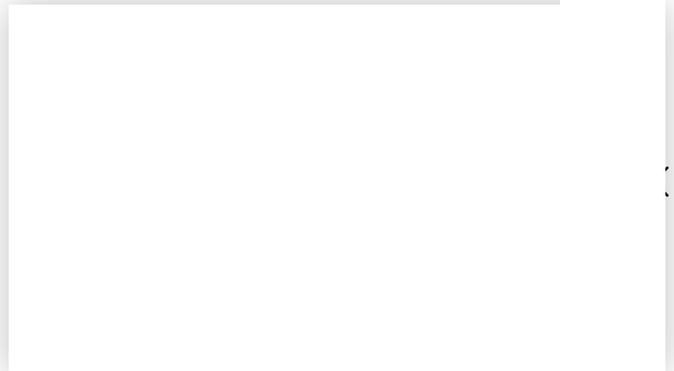
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