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## **FloridaCommerce Activates the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program, Making \$15 Million Available for Businesses Impacted by Hurricane Helene**

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**TALLAHASSEE, Fla.** — FloridaCommerce activated the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program, making \$15 million available for businesses impacted by Hurricane Helene. Florida small business owners in need of assistance are encouraged to visit [FloridaJobs.org/EBL](https://FloridaJobs.org/EBL) to apply for the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program. Businesses in the following counties, including sole proprietors, are eligible to apply: Alachua, Baker, Bay, Bradford, Brevard, Calhoun, Charlotte, Citrus, Clay, Collier, Columbia, DeSoto, Dixie, Duval, Escambia, Flagler, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Glades, Gulf, Hamilton, Hardee, Hendry, Hernando, Highlands, Hillsborough, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lake, Lee, Leon, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Manatee, Marion, Monroe, Nassau, Okaloosa, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, Putnam, Santa Rosa, Sarasota, Seminole, St. Johns, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Volusia, Wakulla, Walton, and Washington counties.

The program provides short-term, zero-interest loans to small businesses that experienced economic injury or physical damage due to Hurricane Helene. Interested applicants can apply now through November 24, 2024, or until all available funds are expended.

Eligible small businesses may apply for loans of up to \$50,000 through the program. Loans of up to \$100,000 are available for agriculture and aquaculture small businesses. Loans approved through the Emergency Bridge Loan Program 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.

Loans made under this program are short-term, zero-interest, personal loans using State of Florida funds. They are not grants and loans must be repaid by the approved applicant.

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FloridaCommerce administers the Emergency Bridge Loan Program alongside its fiscal administrator, Florida First Capital Finance Corporation.

Visit [FloridaJobs.org/EBL](https://FloridaJobs.org/EBL) to learn more about the program, view the lending guidelines and required documentation, and complete an application by the November 24, 2024, deadline. Business owners who need further program information may call 833-832-4494 Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Eastern Time.

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For Immediate Release: September 27, 2024:

FloridaCommerce Activates Business Damage Assessment Survey to Measure Impact of Damage Caused by Hurricane Helene Tallahassee, FL - Today, FloridaCommerce and the State Emergency Response Team (SERT) activated the Business Damage Assessment Survey in response to Hurricane Helene. Business owners can self-report physical and economic damage caused by Hurricane Helene. Survey responses will allow the state to expedite Hurricane Helene recovery efforts by gathering data and assessing the needs of impacted businesses.

***Businesses can complete the survey online by visiting [FloridaDisaster.biz](https://FloridaDisaster.biz) and selecting “Hurricane Helene” from the dropdown menu. If you need additional assistance with your business, please call the private sector hotline at 850-815-4925, open daily, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., or email [ESF18@em.myflorida.com](mailto:ESF18@em.myflorida.com).***

**Chamber Member Businesses ready to help during the Aftermath:**

**CST Group**

***Here’s what we recommend you do to prepare:***

- 1. Please make sure all technology is up off the floor.***

- 2. Make sure critical computers are backed up. If you are on a CST managed services plan with backup, keep your computers on until Tuesday so we can ensure backups are complete. If your technology is monitored by another IT firm, please confirm with them that backups are being done and tested. If you are handling your technology in house, please make sure backups are done and tested on critical computers.**
- 3. If you need to stay operational during the hurricane, ensure that Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) systems and backup generators are operational, and that they have enough fuel and battery life to maintain critical services, if needed.**
- 4. When you leave your offices with no plans to return until after the hurricane, please shut down and unplug all technology including printers, scanners, computers, network equipment, etc. We do not want that equipment to get an electrical surge with unpredictable power.**

**What CST is doing:**

**If you are CST client, we are ensuring backups are complete and tested. My Team is available NOW if you need any assistance with any of the above. I and Shawn are in Punta Gorda to assist with anything that may need our attention. We have spoken to our suppliers to ensure that replacement equipment is available if needed.**

**Our NY Team is available, now, during and after this storm if anyone needs assistance – please call 877-954-4100.**

**Stay safe everyone and CST is available to get your offices operational after the storm is over.**

**Lisa**

**CST Group**

- For water and flood clean-up, call **The Damex Corporation**. We are ready to help, so call us today at 941.624.3100. We have a 24 HR emergency service to dry out your home or business. We are also licensed and certified for mold remediation. And as a general contractor, we can repair and rebuild your place!
- **Holden Roofing** - Call (941) 303-0515 for any of your roofing needs.
- **Mighty Dog Roofing** – Call (941) 239.771.3401. Mighty Dog Roofing can also offer roof inspections for folks that might have concerns about the condition of their roofs. It's complimentary service and can just give peace of mind in these unsettling times. We look forward to helping anyway we can.
- We have close to one hundred 8x16 portable storage containers ready to be delivered today to Punta Gorda and the surrounding areas. These units are perfect for storing items for your home or business and protecting them from further damage while construction and repairs are being done. We also have 8x16 air-conditioned portable office style units for anyone whose business or home office was damaged, and they are needing office space to work. Please contact **StoragePup** - Tara at (941) 347-8176 for more details.

- **Marine Contracting Group** -

Residential and commercial seawall, dock and boat lift damage assessments and no obligation repair and restoration estimates. 941-505-0221

- **Charlotte Plumbing** - We have been supporting our customers with repairs from the storm and have a team who are focused on helping people get back on their feet. Call 941-625-9981 and our website [www.charlotte.plumbing](http://www.charlotte.plumbing)
- [Plumbing Services | Port Charlotte, FL | Charlotte Plumbing](#)
- Our business would be happy to go out and check homes for seasonal homeowners or vacation or rental homeowners who are away and unable to determine the condition of their homes after this storm. **Lawn and Property Care LLC, (LPC)**. LPC is Your Trusted Home Watch Expert. We are insured, bonded, and Certified Home

Watch Reporters. We are members of the Home Watch Network. We serve Punta Gorda and the Burnt Store Road Corridor. We provide full reports and pictures so you can have peace of mind.

lpchomewatch@yahoo.com

<http://www.lpchomewatch.com>

Charlotte County has an online Self-Reporting Storm Damage system to help us collect damage assessments. Visit [www.tinyurl.com/reportingdamage](http://www.tinyurl.com/reportingdamage) , enter your address, select the type of damage and add a photo. If possible, include high water marks when reporting damage.

Debris removal/clean up assistance Crisis Cleanup line: **844-965-1386**

ARCHway Institute Hurricane Helene Relief Fund - [ARCHway wants to Help those impacted by Hurricane Helene, ARCHway Institute \(thearchwayinstitute.org\)](#)