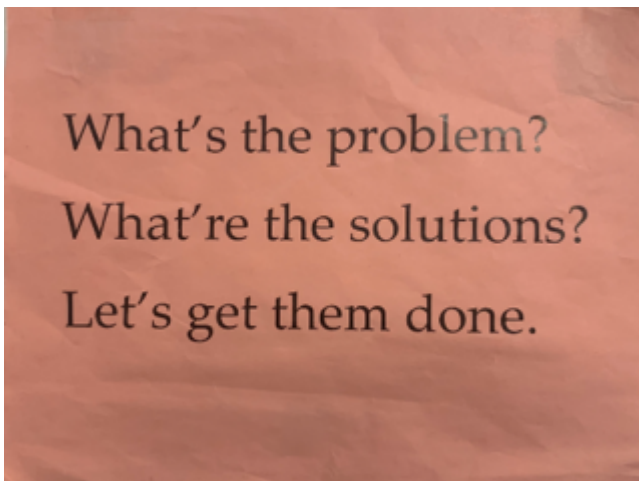




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Getting It Done



A mantra posted on the walls of several offices at the National Council of Nonprofits reads: “What’s the problem? What’re the solutions? Let’s get them done.” Our colleagues at the **North Carolina Center for Nonprofits** are living that mantra in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene. Their actions are a quintessential lesson in Advocacy in Action!

To refresh everyone’s recollection, Hurricane Helene ripped through wide swaths of the Southeastern U.S. in September of this year, inflicting numerous fatalities and causing widespread destruction. It was one of the strongest, costliest, and deadliest hurricanes ever to hit that region of the country. The federal government and many charitable nonprofits have raced in to help; Congress may consider action in the coming weeks.



In North Carolina, the mountainous western part of the state was extremely hard hit. The Governor and Legislature have approved some relief and recovery support, but more is needed. That is why the work of the North Carolina Center *for* Nonprofits is so important. Let's turn to the mantra to tell part of the story, using the [NC Center's message to lawmakers](#) as a guide:

What's the problem?

As the Center explained to state lawmakers: "More than 2,100 charitable nonprofits provide services in the 25 counties in western North Carolina that suffered the worst effects of the hurricane, and many of these organizations have incurred significant damage to their facilities, supplies, and infrastructure. This greatly limits their ability to provide critical services to their communities."

What're the solutions?

The Center is proposing a six-part plan because no one solution would address all of the needs of area nonprofits and the people they serve.

- They urge lawmakers to ensure nonprofits are eligible for all relief programs available to businesses, not a foregone conclusion nonprofits often find (often too late).
- The Center is also calling for the creation of a dedicated nonprofit relief and recovery fund to provide immediate and long-term financial support.
- To generate additional private support, they propose a tax credit for charitable contributions targeting relief efforts.
- Other solutions include exempting charitable nonprofits from sales taxes since many organizations will be spending significant funds on rebuilding materials and services, plus holding nonprofits harmless for unemployment liability, something of great concern for self-insured nonprofit employers.

Still talking about solutions, the Center encourages lawmakers to listen to their local nonprofits to identify even more solutions. “Engage with nonprofits in affected parts of the state to identify unmet needs in their communities. As first responders address urgent issues like housing and basic necessities, community-based nonprofits can provide critical insights into the longer-term needs that may be overlooked by policymakers.”

Let’s get them done.

Sending a list of to-do items to busy lawmakers normally isn’t enough to guarantee appropriate action. In a recent message to nonprofits throughout the state, the Center shared the collection of proposals and [encouraged nonprofit professionals to reach out](#) to their legislators.

The Center is going further by collecting and sharing stories of impact and need. They ask their nonprofit readers, **“If you and/or your nonprofit was directly harmed by the hurricane, serves people and communities that were affected, or is providing relief and recovery services, please [share with the Center](#) any types of legislative assistance that would be helpful for your nonprofit and the people and community you serve.”** The Center will then communicate those needs to state lawmakers working on hurricane relief and recovery legislation

But the Center recognizes that the advocacy of one organization alone cannot carry the day. They encourage local nonprofits to reach out to state legislators directly as well.

That last bit, many voices promoting the same solutions, is the “let’s” part of “Let’s get them done.”

We wish our North Carolina colleagues success. And hope to learn from their efforts to help us all fine-tune our advocacy to “get them done.”