



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on October 2, 2024

Biden-Harris Admin Redirects FEMA Funds to Illegal Immigrants, Prioritizes “Equity” in Disaster Relief

As the people of North Carolina, Georgia, and surrounding states are struggling to recover from the devastation left by Hurricane Helene, questions are being raised about the Biden-Harris administration’s allocation of critical disaster relief funding. While hundreds remain missing in flood-ravaged Appalachian towns, with families waiting for federal assistance, it became apparent that more than a billion dollars of Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) funds have been diverted for services to illegal immigrants.



AP Images

According to [The Federalist](#), FEMA, the agency responsible for coordinating emergency responses to natural disasters, redirected nearly \$364 million in 2023 and an additional \$650 million in 2024 to the “Shelter and Services Program.” This program, as described on the government’s [own website](#) referenced by the outlet, provides humanitarian assistance to non-citizen migrants released from U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) short-term holding facilities. In collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), officials allocated these funds to support the “orderly and humane release” of migrants. This decision sparked sharp criticism, as prioritizing migrant assistance diverted resources from urgent domestic needs.

“Woke” Transformation of FEMA

One of the entities to pick up the news was America First Legal (AFL), a conservative legal advocacy organization founded by Stephen Miller, a former senior advisor to President Donald Trump.

In a series of posts on X, AFL broke down the FEMA’s apparent shift in priorities under the Biden-Harris administration. For example, AFL argued that FEMA’s [Emergency Food and Shelter Program](#) has been reshaped to provide funding [primarily](#) to “families and individuals encountered by the Department of Homeland Security at the southern border,” also known as illegal migrants. According to AFL, \$685 million in taxpayer dollars have been reallocated to fund services for these individuals. One of the posts read,

“Over the last 4 years the Biden-Harris admin has steadily transformed FEMA — the agency responsible for responding to natural disasters like Hurricane Helene — into an illegal alien resettlement agency that emphasizes DEI over public safety.”

The group detailed,

The Shelter and Services Program is designed to exclusively provide shelter and services to



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illegal aliens. Over \$1 BILLION in taxpayer dollars have been allocated between FY2023 and FY2024.

For instance, FEMA allocated over \$38 million to New York City, a sanctuary city [facing an influx](#) of illegal immigrants. The city has been using these funds to provide gift cards and hotel accommodations for the migrants.

AFL's thread highlights FEMA's increasing focus on "equity." This priority mainly targets so-called vulnerable populations, such as those with functional needs or individuals whose primary language is not English. One key initiative AFL pointed to is the November 2023 ["Post-Disaster Guide for Local Officials and Leaders."](#) This guide aims to ensure "equitable recovery" in disaster-affected areas. The guide prioritizes relief efforts based on race, sex, and sexual preferences.

AFL also took issue with FEMA's ["Summary of Eight Equity Goals."](#) These goals advocate for "equitable outcomes" and "justice for all" after natural disasters. Further, AFL emphasized FEMA's focus on specific groups, such as "people of color," "women," and "the LGBTQ+ community." This focus has drawn criticism for prioritizing these groups in disaster responses. Arguably, this emphasis diverts resources away from addressing the needs of broader populations. AFL argued that such policies imply that "natural disasters don't have the same impact on white straight men."

To conclude, the organization contended that FEMA is now using disaster response as a vehicle to push a "radical equity agenda." At the same time, FEMA's funds are being utilized to support and resettle illegal immigrants rather than providing aid directly to disaster-affected Americans.

FEMA and Helene

During Hurricane Helene, from its landfall to its subsequent impact on multiple states from September 25 to September 30, FEMA faced significant criticism for its handling of the disaster response. The storm, a Category 4 hurricane, caused widespread destruction, leaving more than 120 people dead and many areas flooded, especially in North Carolina, Georgia, and other neighboring states.

Critics argued that FEMA was slow to respond, with some shelters in western North Carolina reportedly over capacity and lacking adequate food supplies. Journalists and social-media users criticized FEMA for being "nowhere to be found." Countless reports highlighted the agency's lack of adequate response, which fueled frustration among residents who were waiting for federal assistance.

Some referenced the August reports that FEMA "ran out of money" and therefore was of no help to struggling Americans.

Some observers argued that President Biden did not request additional funds for FEMA. At the same time, they noted, he sent billions of dollars to support foreign wars. This comparison sparked further criticism of his administration's priorities.

Critics fiercely attacked FEMA for prioritizing "equity" in its disaster relief efforts, as outlined in its 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. They argued that this focus took attention away from addressing the urgent



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needs of disaster victims.

“In case you’re wondering why the response to Hurricane Helene has been a disaster... Fema’s goal 1 is to instill equity as a foundation of emergency management,” posted Libs of TikTok.

Harris, Biden, Trump

Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Kamala Harris faced backlash for her apparent inability to handle a disaster response. Conservatives blasted Harris for participating in what appeared to be a staged disaster briefing. She also faced criticism for refusing to answer questions from the press. This added to the growing public dissatisfaction with the federal response.

At the time, Harris’ boss, President Biden, spent a relaxing weekend at [his go-to beach](#). Former President Donald Trump, Harris’ opponent in the race, traveled to Valdosta, Georgia. The storm hit this area particularly hard. During his visit, he partnered with relief organizations to deliver supplies.

This entire fiasco further reinforces the need to get the federal government out of the “disaster relief” business. FEMA is, of course, an unconstitutional federal agency that has seemingly done more harm than good during its existence. Disaster-relief efforts would be much better handled at the state or local level, in conjunction with private efforts.



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