

Aviva Campbell

 aviva_campbell@icloud.com

 [LinkedIn](#)

Innovating Disaster Response: A Regional Model for the Future of Crisis Communication

As the lead creative writer on the WNC Ready campaign, I had the opportunity to help shape a unified voice for disaster response across western North Carolina. Working alongside my team at Big Sea, we partnered with WNC Health Network (WNCHN)—a nonprofit dedicated to improving health and equity in the region—to deliver critical public health messaging in the wake of Hurricane Helene.

Our goal was to create a communications strategy that could cut through the chaos and provide residents with timely, accessible, and actionable information. We crafted content for Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and other digital platforms, with Facebook serving as the campaign's central hub due to its broad demographic reach.



**Preparedness for WNC, powered by
local public health partnerships.**

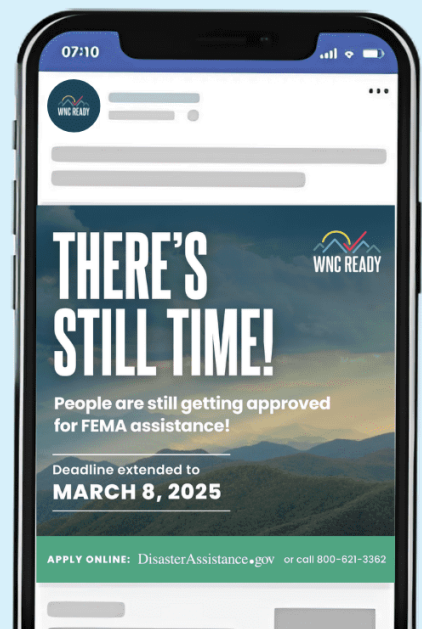
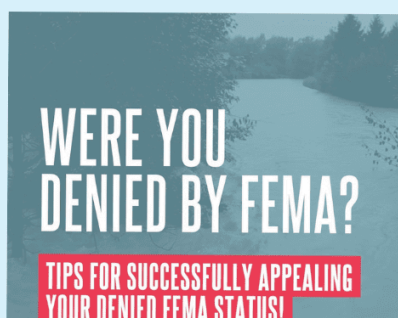


Our Objectives: Building Unity, Speed, and Support Across 22 Counties

- **Create One Regional Voice:** Unite 22 counties under a cohesive messaging strategy to ensure consistent and accurate information delivery.
 - **Bolster Recovery Efforts:** Share safety guidelines, emergency aid resources, and mental health support through widely used digital platforms.
 - **Enhance Agility in Disaster Response:** Build an adaptive framework informed by community feedback and best practices to improve speed and effectiveness.
-

The Problem: Western NC Faces Crisis After Hurricane Helene and a Breakdown in Communication

In September 2024, Hurricane Helene devastated western North Carolina, displacing thousands and crippling communication infrastructure. With cell towers offline and communities in crisis, the need for a unified emergency communications strategy became urgent. WNCHN and its partners—including 22 county health departments—faced the unprecedented task of coordinating a regional response that could reach people quickly and effectively.



The Strategy: Strengthening Emergency Response Through Unified Regional Communications and Creative Agility

As part of Big Sea's creative team, I helped lead the development of messaging that was clear, culturally relevant, and emotionally resonant. Our strategy unfolded in four key stages:

- **Research:** We reviewed FEMA, CDC, and NC DHHS guidelines to ensure accuracy and relevance.
- **Messaging & Creation:** I wrote and refined public health messages in both English and Spanish, incorporating input from local partners to ensure community alignment.
- **Ad Selection & Circulation:** We deployed targeted ads across Meta and YouTube to maximize reach and engagement.
- **Evaluation:** Our team monitored performance in real time, using data to iterate and improve messaging throughout the campaign.

This agile, feedback-driven approach allowed us to respond quickly to evolving needs and ensure our content remained impactful.

The Results: Setting a New Standard for Regional Disaster Response Through Collaboration and Digital Reach

WNC Ready became the first unified regional disaster response initiative of its kind in the U.S., setting a new standard for emergency communications. By replacing fragmented efforts with coordinated messaging, we reached nearly 1 million people across western North Carolina. The campaign's success demonstrated the power of collaboration, strategic storytelling, and digital agility in times of crisis.