

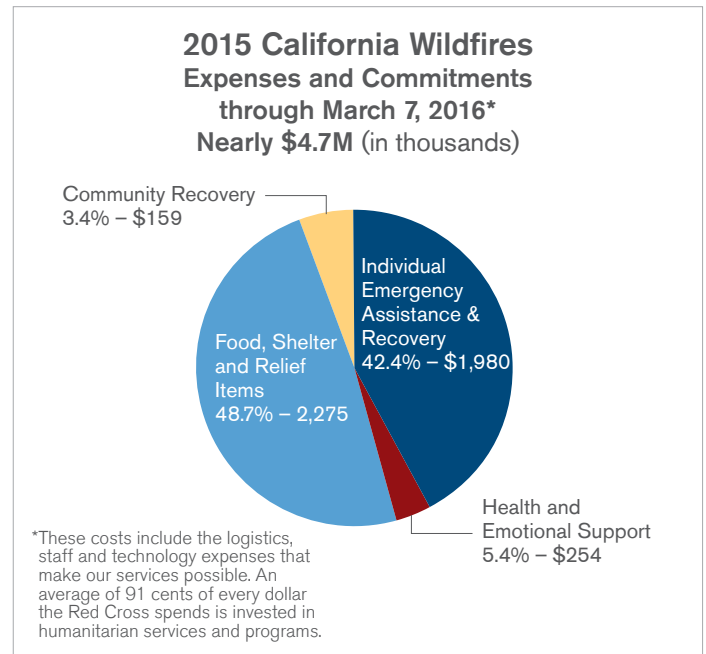
Red Cross Supports Recovery Following Devastating Butte and Valley Fires

The Butte and Valley Fires destroyed more than 1,700 homes and brought heartbreaking losses to thousands of Californians in Calaveras, Amador and Lake Counties last September. For many, the fires engulfed not only their family homes, but also cherished personal belongings, vehicles, livestock and pets.

While the fires raged and in the weeks that followed, American Red Cross workers focused on the immediate needs of affected residents, including shelter, food, cleanup and relief items, health services and emotional support. Six months later, with the recovery process well under way, the Red Cross and our partners continue to care for the people and communities impacted by these destructive wildfires.

Helping Wildfire Survivors Recover

Thanks to our compassionate donors, the Red Cross has raised approximately \$4.1 million in donations and pledges for wildfires in states across the West (including Alaska, Ariz., Calif., Idaho, Mont., Ore., Wash.) and will spend all donations to assist people



affected by these western wildfires. Additionally, the Red Cross has raised approximately \$4.5 million specifically for the September fires in California, and, as of March 7, we have spent or committed to spend nearly \$4.7 million for communities impacted by these fires.*



April Vazquez shares her artwork with Red Cross worker Jordan Scott at the Kelseyville (Calif.) High School shelter. April and her family stayed at the shelter following the eruption of the Valley Fire.

*Note—A review in April 2016 led to the revision of two figures: \$4.1 million raised for wildfires across the west and \$4.5 million raised for wildfires in California.

New Red Cross Assistance Center Opens in Mountain Ranch for Butte Fire Survivors

Six months after one of the most destructive wildfires in California's history, the work of recovery and reconstruction is palpable in Calaveras County. At the new Red Cross Assistance Center in Mountain Ranch, Disaster Program Manager Debbie Calcote is helping affected individuals and families as they recover from the Butte Fire.

Much work remains to be done, as some families are still living in trailers or tents with no power, water or plumbing. The Red Cross has opened nearly 600 cases to address unmet needs, including food, housing, medical assistance, spiritual care, emotional support and more.

Debbie and her team work with the clients to locate available resources and, just as importantly, lend a sympathetic ear. "It gets hard..., sometimes we just sit and cry," Debbie said. "But there are also moments of hope, like when a family receives those things that most of us take for granted—sheets, blankets or a comforter."

The Red Cross is working with community leaders as well as other partner organizations and governments in a group called Calaveras Recovers—with the knowledge that recovery will be a marathon, not a sprint. The group will focus and coordinate efforts, and share information to help impacted families. One goal is to help build 100 homes for fire survivors who were uninsured or under-insured, as well as helping repair septic tanks and wells that were damaged during the firefight.

Debbie and her team will continue to work for many months, possibly years, to help Butte Fire victims rebuild their lives and obtain a "new normal."

Red Cross Partners with Community Groups to Support Valley Fire Recovery

On a rainy Sunday in December, Red Cross volunteers and Cobb Mountain residents braved the elements and took another small step in the area's recovery from the devastating Valley Fire that ravaged Lake County.

Nearly 150 tarps, courtesy of the Red Cross, were given away at the Little Red School House in Cobb to help people protect their fire-ravaged land from the soil erosion in the coming winter—just one of many ways the organization has contributed to the Valley Fire recovery effort.

Sometimes it's simply locating resources and organizations willing to help. For example, long-time volunteer Eleanor Guzik from Ventura, Calif., worked with non-profit and business partners to help five people who lost costly hearing aids replace them free of charge.

The Red Cross is also working with Team Lake County (TLC)—a collection of non-profit organizations and county agencies—to assess needs and coordinate many of the recovery efforts, and we have activated the "Coordinated Assistance Network" (CAN), an online platform that shares people's unmet recovery needs with partner agencies. Additionally, the Red Cross has hired a Recovery Manager to coordinate with partners and support impacted residents.

Recovery planning and organizing began as soon as the fire was extinguished. "We shifted into long-term recovery mode pretty quickly," said Red Cross Senior Disaster Program Manager Mike Conroy. "Whether it be financial support or casework that helps families plan their recovery, we have just tried to pitch in where and when we can. But it is very much a community-wide effort."

.....

Thank you!

The Red Cross must be ready for every disaster, big or small, and we respond to an average of nearly 66,000 disasters per year—including single-family or apartment home fires, severe weather, floods and wildfires. Those in need turn to the Red Cross in their darkest hours because they know they can depend on us right after the disaster and through their recovery. Your donation helps us fulfill this promise. We are grateful for your trust.