

AUGUST 2025

HAWAII WILDFIRES TWO-YEAR REPORT



**American
Red Cross**

A NOTE FROM

Cliff Holtz, President and CEO, American Red Cross



Since catastrophic wildfires swept through Lahaina and Kula, Hawaii, two years ago, the American Red Cross has continued to stand with heartbroken residents and their communities, providing relief, comfort and enduring support for recovery.

In the wake of these devastating blazes, Red Cross disaster responders, both from the local community and locations across the U.S., worked alongside our partners to bring vital disaster relief and recovery services to thousands of wildfire survivors. With so many homes destroyed and available housing in short supply, Red Crossers also continued to support the needs of impacted individuals and families sheltering in local hotels for months after the disaster.

During a visit to Maui shortly after the wildfires, I was inspired by the compassion and commitment of our dedicated volunteers and employees, who delivered meals, shelter, health services, emotional support and financial assistance to help meet urgent needs like rental deposits, transportation, replacing lost food and clothing, and much more. I was also deeply impressed by the strength and resilience of local community members who stepped up again and again to aid neighbors in need.

In year two of our response, the Red Cross has provided ongoing care for wildfire survivors, including recovery guidance and planning for people who need extra help to get back on their feet. We've also funded grants to local partners with specialized expertise to help impacted families and communities recover and become better prepared for future emergencies. I am grateful for all you've done to make this work possible. On behalf of those we serve, thank you very much for your generosity.

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cliff".

Cliff Holtz

Right: In Lahaina, Hawaii, Valentin Felix and his mom, Maria Elena Felix, talk with Red Cross volunteer Cathy Sharpe. As Valentin translated, his mother shared the story of how her property manager, covered in soot, saved her life by waking her up and warning her of the approaching fires. She plans to use Bridge Assistance from the Red Cross to help her find a new home, without leaving the community that has supported her and saved her from the fires. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

Cover photo: Grace Leal (left) embraces Skye Koealani Razon-Olds, director of resiliency for the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA), in front of the home where she now lives with her husband. After losing their home to the fires, the couple received support from the Direct Lease program, co-created with CNHA and the Red Cross, which ensured they have a safe, secure place to stay as they continue their recovery journey. Photo by Jillian Robertson/American Red Cross





HAWAII WILDFIRES IMPACT AT A GLANCE



Served more than
3.6 million meals and snacks with partners



Provided more than
2.2 million overnight shelter and hotel stays with partners



Reached an estimated
32,750 people with disaster relief and recovery services including **financial assistance totaling \$25.2 million**

Cumulative figures as of July 8, 2025.

Providing Care and Comfort to Heartbroken Residents

When fast-moving wildfires swept through Lahaina and Kula, Hawaii, in August 2023, the American Red Cross quickly mobilized to deliver vital aid to heartbroken residents — many of whom had lost everything but the clothes on their backs. Two years later, we are still standing with the impacted communities, helping people rebuild their lives through our Long-Term Recovery program.

DELIVERING RELIEF AND COMFORT: In the immediate aftermath of these tragic blazes, over 1,200 trained Red Cross disaster workers mobilized to support the response, working 24/7 to provide relief and comfort to wildfire survivors, including nourishing meals, health and mental health care, and support for bereaved families. In addition, our reunification services helped reconnect families with loved ones separated by the wildfires, a critical resource in the chaotic aftermath of the disaster.

SHELTERING DISPLACED RESIDENTS: The Red Cross worked together with local and government partners to establish 54 emergency shelters across the islands in the early days of our response. We then continued to support non-congregate sheltering for displaced residents in local hotels for months after the disaster, ultimately helping to provide more than 2.22 million overnight shelter stays to people who were forced to evacuate or who had lost their homes.

HELPING WITH RECOVERY PLANS AND MORE: Along with meals, shelter, and other necessities, our volunteers served as a consistent daily presence for wildfire survivors — assisting with their recovery planning, identifying and

Above: Wildfire survivor D. James and Red Cross volunteer Kathleen Harrowby embrace in front of a Red Cross shelter at the South Maui Community Park Gymnasium in Kihei. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

connecting them with available resources from our partners and offering additional counsel as they began to get back on their feet and rebuild their lives. Health and mental health professionals were also on hand and reachable by phone 24 hours a day.

“Christy is my angel.”

KATHRYN (KAT) SMIRKE,
WILDFIRE SURVIVOR,
SHARING HOW A RED CROSS
VOLUNTEER HELPED WITH
HER RECOVERY NEEDS

DELIVERING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: Financial assistance is a critical component of Red Cross relief and recovery support. Leveraging satellite data and advanced tools, we accelerated the process of damage assessment, enabling us to swiftly roll out our Immediate Financial Assistance program. Given the steep local expenses and the severe toll of the wildfires, we also raised the typical assistance amount to better support survivors with pressing needs — such as purchasing food, replacing essential personal items, covering travel costs and addressing other urgent expenses.

Nearly three months after the fires began, we also delivered Bridge Assistance — an additional round of funding to help people whose homes had suffered major damage or were destroyed — to help them overcome significant recovery roadblocks and resume their lives. All told, the Red Cross provided financial assistance totaling approximately \$25.2 million (including both Immediate and Bridge Assistance), reaching thousands of people uprooted by the fires.

This financial support has made a real difference for Lahaina residents like Kathryn (Kat) Smirke and her family. After a frantic flight from the approaching fire with her two children, the family was able to reach safety, but their home and all its contents were lost.

Staying in a borrowed condo and temporarily out of work due to the impact of wildfires, Kat was grateful for support from friends and neighbors, as well as guidance from Christy, a Red Cross volunteer. Christy provided a steady presence who helped Kat navigate recovery and alerted her to available Bridge Assistance funds. “Christy is my angel,” she said.



Kathryn (Kat) Smirke, of Lahaina, Hawaii, shares her story outside a borrowed condo where she is staying with her family after losing her home to the wildfire. Kat received Bridge Assistance and other support from the Red Cross to help her overcome critical gaps in her disaster recovery. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

Supporting Long-Term Recovery for Individuals, Families and Their Communities

In the two years since these tragic blazes devastated Maui communities, we have worked closely with other nonprofits, government and community organizations to fill gaps in services and connect survivors with long-term recovery resources and additional support—including grants to partners with deep local knowledge and expertise to help affected individuals, families and their communities address ongoing recovery needs.

Our community recovery partners continue to help those affected by the fires, boosted by funding from our generous donors. These Red Cross grant recipients are working to address critical recovery needs, including mental health, housing, food security and more. Some examples of their recovery work are featured below.

Our Kupuna: Providing Respect, Pantry Staples for Elders Red Cross grantee and community recovery partner Our Kupuna focuses on weekly food deliveries to home-bound elders, or kupuna (a Hawaiian term of respect and reverence for those with senior status), who were displaced by the wildfires. The food delivery doubles as an opportunity for other care and referrals, as volunteers sit with these elders and talk. It's as much community therapy as it is food delivery service.

For example, a volunteer delivering food to Ki Soon, a kupuna originally from Korea, tried some of the kimchi she had made the night before, then noted what type of cabbage and dried chilis she used to ensure she added them in the next week's delivery.



Red Cross team members work alongside volunteers from Our Kupuna, one of our community recovery partners, to assemble food bags to be delivered to Lahaina elders displaced by the wildfires. Photo by Jillian Robertson/American Red Cross

Our Kupuna is proud to provide this level of care. Shannon I'i, an Our Kupuna team member and the Maui Program Coordinator, reported the first day of deliveries took 10 hours, as they spent extra time with each recipient. As they returned to the office after dark, they were grateful for each moment. Many of Our Kupuna's staff and volunteers are wildfire survivors themselves, and they described the experience as an opportunity to heal their own trauma.

Grace Leal, wildfire survivor, said her recovery “felt like 10 steps forward, 100 steps back.” Now, she has a safe, secure home to continue her recovery, thanks to the partnership of CNHA and the Red Cross.

Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement: Housing Support for Displaced Families As first featured in our one-year report, the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) co-created two grant funded programs with the Red Cross to support families displaced by the wildfires the Host Family and Direct Lease programs. The Host Family Program provides financial assistance to families who have opened their homes to friends and neighbors displaced by the fires. The second is the Direct Lease Program, through which CNHA provides 12 months of free housing for families with the fewest recovery resources.

This support has meant so much to wildfire survivors like Grace Leal and her husband, Matteo, who lost their home of 35 years — a home they had built themselves — to the flames. Not long after, Matteo was diagnosed with lymphoma and referred to a specialist in Seattle for medical treatment. Grace and Matteo left, unaware that, by leaving, they were making themselves ineligible for federal resources upon their return.

Their recovery, she said, “felt like 10 steps forward, 100 steps back.” Now, thanks to CNHA, the direct lease program and a partnership with the Red Cross, she has a safe, secure home to continue her recovery.



Grace Leal (center), who lost her home in Lahaina to the fires, speaks with members of the CNHA team outside the new home where she and her husband, Matteo, have settled, thanks to the Direct Lease program, co-created by CNHA and the Red Cross. Photo by Jillian Robertson/American Red Cross

Catholic Charities Hawaii: Helping First Responders Recover Through a Red Cross grant, Catholic Charities Hawaii has provided a therapy program specifically focused on first responders, a population lauded for the important work they do during and after a disaster, but also notorious for not reaching out for help themselves.

This “helping the helpers” model supports the recovery of community service providers after the trauma of the Maui wildfires, leaving them more resilient before the next disaster strikes. The work is ongoing today, with several of the other Red Cross grantees and community recovery partners receiving therapy and other mental health support themselves, provided by Catholic Charities Hawaii.



Top: Red Cross Long-Term Recovery director Amanda Ree (center) meets with members of the Catholic Charities Hawaii team, in one of the rooms where mental health services are provided to wildfire first responders. Photo by Jillian Robertson/American Red Cross

Maui Food Bank: Feeding the Hungry with Dignity and Joy Earlier this year, members of the Long-Term Recovery team attended the blessing of Maui Food Bank's Da Market in Lahaina, as well as two mobile food distribution trucks, nicknamed “Uncle Mana” and “Auntie Momi,” which will reach fire survivors unable to physically visit the market. All were made possible through Red Cross grants.

Rev. Kalani Wong, who presided over the blessing, described how it was Hawaiian tradition to clean and purify using salt and water and sprinkled a mixture of both on the truck and the entrance of the market, draped in a ti leaf lei. “We want to bring about a healing for our people today,” he said to the assembled crowd. The truck itself speaks to the mission of the Maui Food Bank: to deliver food to communities in need, in a joyful, upbeat way.

This healing spirit also informs the design of Da Market. Rather than treating visitors as passive recipients of assistance, the space is open, welcoming and styled like a regular market, complete with shopping carts. The market also focuses on providing culturally appropriate items for the island's Native Hawaiian, Filipino and Latino communities.

“We are just so proud and honored to walk alongside these partners in recovery, offering technical expertise and resources to empower those connections, making their services go farther, ultimately ensuring Maui is stronger and more resilient than before,”

AMANDA REE, LONG-TERM RECOVERY DIRECTOR, AMERICAN RED CROSS



Right: “Auntie Momi” is one of two mobile food distribution trucks used by Red Cross partner Maui Food Bank to reach fire survivors unable to physically visit the food bank’s market. Both trucks and the market were made possible through Red Cross grants. Photo by Jillian Robertson/American Red Cross

Long-Term Recovery Grantees Continue to Provide Support

These are just a few examples of long-term recovery grantee partnerships supported by the Red Cross, some of which began just a few weeks after the August 2023 fire. Two years since the wildfires, our partners continue working to help meet vital needs.

“We are just so proud and honored to walk alongside these partners in recovery, offering technical expertise and resources to empower those connections, making their services go farther, ultimately ensuring Maui is stronger and more resilient than before,” said Amanda Ree, Red Cross long-term recovery director.

Compassionate Donors Powered Relief and Recovery Support

Thanks to compassionate donors, the Red Cross raised \$93.8 million—including the value of critical donated goods and services—designated for our Hawaii Wildfires response to help people affected by this disaster. As of July 8, 2025, the Red Cross had spent approximately \$99.9 million on emergency relief and recovery efforts for the Hawaii Wildfires. This includes an additional Red Cross investment of \$6 million to support crucial long-term recovery needs.

Hawaii Wildfires Expenses and Commitments ^{1,2} (in millions) as of As of July 8, 2025						
Expense Categories	Food, Shelter, and Relief Items	Health and Emotional Support	Financial Assistance	Community Recovery & Resilience	Total	Expense %
Financial assistance, food, shelter and other relief items	\$13.0	\$0.3	\$12.6	\$11.5	\$37.4	38%
Long-term recovery programs to help unmet needs	—	—	\$12.6	\$5.3	\$17.9	18%
Temporary disaster hires	\$8.4	\$2.5	\$1.9	\$0.6	\$13.4	13%
Deployment of volunteers and staff (includes airfare, lodging, meals and vehicles)	\$7.5	\$2.2	\$1.7	—	\$11.4	11%
Full-time Red Cross employees	\$3.7	\$0.2	\$1.0	\$0.8	\$5.7	6%
IT, communications and call centers	\$0.9	\$0.3	\$0.6	—	\$1.8	2%
Kitchen, shelter and other logistics that enable service delivery	\$1.1	\$0.3	\$0.3	—	\$1.7	2%
Freight, postage and warehousing	\$0.4	—	—	—	\$0.4	0%
Equipment, maintenance and fueling of Red Cross emergency vehicles and rented trucks	\$0.3	—	—	—	\$0.3	0%
Total Program Expenses	\$35.3	\$5.8	\$30.7	\$18.2	\$90.0	90%
Management, general and fundraising ³					\$9.9	10%
Total Spent and Committed					\$99.9	100%

¹Dollar figures in all tables are rounded to the nearest \$100,000; therefore, expenses \$49,999 and below are represented as zero.

²Does not include expenses incurred for emergency hotel stays and associated meals for more than 6,000 wildfire survivors. These significant expenses were reimbursed by the state of Hawaii.

³Management, general and fundraising expenses support our work at its core and are indispensable to running the organization and helping people in need. They include the people and systems to maintain our enterprise-wide computer and telecommunications, HR, payroll and similar systems to support nearly 18,000 employees and approximately 275,000 volunteers, fundraising and communications functions, and other support services across all program lines. Ninety cents of every dollar spent for the Hawaii Wildfires has supported delivering care and comfort to help people affected by this disaster.



Thank you!



**American
Red Cross**

The Red Cross must be ready for every disaster, and we respond to an average of more than 65,000 disasters each year — including 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 throughout their recovery. Your donation helps us fulfill this promise. We are grateful for your trust.

To learn more about our response, long-term recovery partnerships and the people we've helped, please visit our **Hawaii Wildfires Story Map** at redcross.org/hawaii-wildfires.

Above: Volunteer Mary McGavin plays with Jezeriah at the Hannibal Tavares Community Center in Makawao, where the Red Cross and its partners operated a shelter to help Maui residents displaced by the wildfire.
Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross