

OCTOBER 2025

HURRICANE MILTON ONE-YEAR REPORT



**American
Red Cross**



“The American Red Cross volunteers here have started to feel like my family.”

CIERRA WHITE, ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

When Hurricane Milton struck, St. Petersburg, Florida, resident Cierra White and her four children found refuge at the Rheba Sutton White Chapel Shelter in Palm Harbor, Florida. The family of five evacuated their home after Hurricane Milton's landfall brought damaging winds and flooding into their community.

Cierra said she was very appreciative to have a place to bring her family amidst the chaos caused by the storm. “I don't have a family to fall back on, and the American Red Cross volunteers here have started to feel like my family,” said Cierra. “They are here for me, they support me, and they are protective of me. Before them, I had nobody.”

Above: Photo by Marko Kokic/American Red Cross

Cover: Wimauma, Florida, resident Maria receives a box full of warm meals from Red Cross volunteer Tommy Smith. Maria and her two sons are just many of the Wimauma residents receiving food after the area was without power for several days in the wake of Hurricane Milton. Photo by Marko Kokic/American Red Cross

A LETTER FROM

Cliff Holtz, President and CEO, American Red Cross



In October 2024, Hurricane Milton barreled across Florida, bringing widespread flooding, damaging winds and power outages that, in many cases, lasted for days. For some storm-weary residents, this was not their first time facing such devastation, as Milton battered communities still recovering from recent storms, including hurricanes Ian, Ida and Helene. Understanding this elevated need, the American Red Cross worked in advance to prepare shelters, position supplies and mobilize trained volunteers to meet the needs of people in harm's way.

In fact, the Red Cross helped support safe refuge for more than 20,000 evacuees before the hurricane even made landfall. After the storm came ashore, our volunteers quickly fanned out across the impacted communities, providing nourishing meals and snacks, relief and cleanup supplies, emotional support, immediate financial assistance, and much more. When I visited Florida, I was gratified to see our caring Red Cross disaster workers in action, and I was inspired by the resilience and deep appreciation expressed by so many people who had suffered traumatic losses.

Today, the Red Cross remains committed to helping those impacted by Hurricane Milton. Over the past year, our dedicated caseworkers have stood with storm survivors, helping them make recovery plans and locate available resources. We have also provided additional financial assistance to severely affected individuals and families, helping them overcome persistent obstacles to their recovery. And to aid people across Florida still struggling to get back on their feet after the back-to-back impacts of Helene and Milton, our Long-Term Recovery program is funding strategic grants to nonprofit organizations providing vital recovery and resiliency services to affected communities.

One year after Hurricane Milton's landfall, I am reminded of the incredible contributions of our partners, volunteers and donors who make our work possible. Together, we are helping communities recover and become more resilient in the wake of this heartbreaking disaster. Thank you for your generosity and compassion.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cliff". The signature is stylized and fluid.

Cliff



YOUR SUPPORT MADE AN IMPACT



Reached an estimated **13,000 people** with relief and recovery services, including **\$6.8 million** in financial assistance



Served more than **500,000 meals and snacks** with partners



Provided over **153,000 overnight shelter stays** with partners



Provided relief supplies to more than **1,800 households**

Cumulative figures as of September 9, 2025.

Delivering Help and Hope to Storm-Weary Florida Residents

In October 2024, Hurricane Milton made landfall on Siesta Key, near Sarasota, Florida, just two weeks after Hurricane Helene had already brought severe coastal flooding to the region. Packing 115 mph winds, the Category 3 storm tore through Florida's western Gulf Coast, damaging homes, crippling infrastructure and unleashing a powerful storm surge that once again overwhelmed many vulnerable low-lying areas.

As Milton moved inland across the Florida peninsula, its outer bands triggered a historic tornado outbreak, with destructive twisters ripping through communities in southern and eastern Florida — tearing apart houses, businesses and entire neighborhoods. Torrential rains also caused widespread flooding throughout central Florida, compounding the devastation.

Even before Milton made landfall, hundreds of American Red Cross disaster responders were already hard at work in Florida, supporting people who were still recovering from Helene's recent onslaught. In coordination with local partners, these dedicated teams quickly mobilized alongside our response partners to open shelters and provide critical services as tens of thousands of residents evacuated ahead of Milton's arrival.

Above: Red Cross volunteer Mark Praska smiles while handing a meal to Damaris Cruz at a feeding site in the Casa Verde mobile home park in Tampa, Florida. Volunteers served hundreds of hot meals to the community, where many people lost electrical power for six days because of Hurricane Milton, making this the first warm food they had eaten in nearly a week. Photo by Marko Kovic/American Red Cross

Red Cross volunteers, who were out surveying damage in the area, visited Betty at her home after the disaster. Offering her comfort, encouragement and hope, they quickly alerted Red Cross leaders to the needs in her community.

In the hurricane's aftermath, Red Cross volunteers navigated around flooded or blocked roads in our emergency response vehicles, reaching some of the hardest-hit communities with hot meals, water, relief items, cleanup kits and emotional support for storm survivors — many of whom were left without power for days or faced extra hardships as a result of repeated hurricane impacts across the region. Critically, the Red Cross also provided financial assistance to help affected individuals and families meet immediate needs, like replacing spoiled groceries and damaged clothing, paying for gas or other transportation expenses, and much more.

Our caring volunteers also helped staff community resource centers, assisted with damage assessments and provided basic health services and crisis counseling. Many had traveled from across the country to lend a hand — some returning for a second or third deployment in the region — bringing compassion, resilience and hope to those facing long roads to recovery.

BETTY'S STORY: As Hurricane Milton threatened the western coast of Florida, Betty Queen — who lives in the Manatee Bay community of Stuart, in eastern Florida — found herself facing an unexpected, terrifying ordeal spurred by the storm.

Betty and her family were preparing dinner when a roar filled the air. Betty's son sprang into action, grabbing her by the leg and pulling her to the floor to shield her from an approaching tornado. Other family members sheltered in a bathroom, bracing for the impact.

The tornado, one of dozens that touched down in Florida that night, struck hours before Milton made landfall. A large tree crashed into the front of Betty's home, and the roof was torn away, exposing the house to the elements. In the blink of an eye, the place where she had lived for 38 years, where she had raised her children and grandchildren, was uninhabitable.

Red Cross volunteers, who were out surveying damage in the area, visited Betty at her home after the disaster. Offering her comfort, encouragement and hope, they quickly alerted Red Cross leaders to the needs in her community. Soon after, emergency relief supplies and other assistance began to arrive in the neighborhood.



Stuart, Florida, resident Betty Queen, flanked by Red Crossers Dariana Molina and Steffanie Wesseling, received assistance from the Red Cross after Hurricane Milton spurred a tornado, which heavily damaged her home. Photo by American Red Cross

Betty is not only a survivor, but also a caregiver. Her son, who has a disability, relies on her, making the family's journey to recovery even more challenging. She has seen her share of storms in nearly four decades of living in Florida. But with the support of the Red Cross and our community partners, she knew that this time they would not have to make the journey alone.



Following Hurricane Milton, Red Cross Disaster Health volunteer nurse Angela Fisher takes the blood pressure of shelter resident David Madort at the Veterans Memorial Center shelter in Hudson, Florida. Photo by Marko Kokic/American Red Cross

As of September 9, 2025, the Red Cross had distributed approximately \$6.8 million in direct financial assistance, including Immediate and Bridge Assistance, to help Milton survivors with some of their most pressing needs.

Generous Donors Enabled Cash Assistance for Hard-Hit Survivors

Powered by the generosity of compassionate donors, the Red Cross also launched a **multi-phase financial assistance program** to support residents whose homes were destroyed or severely damaged by Hurricane Milton.

Immediate Assistance—flexible emergency funds that empowered survivors to make decisions based on their unique circumstances—was a key element to relief efforts. Whether used for groceries, fuel, temporary housing, transportation, utility bills or other expenses, this support helped families take the first steps toward rebuilding their lives.

A second round of aid, **Bridge Assistance**, put additional funds in the hands of severely affected families that still faced significant recovery barriers. This assistance, offered a few months into the disaster response, can help bridge the gap after initial response support has ended and before other large-scale resources may be available. Families can use these funds for a wide variety of recovery expenses, such as paying for home repairs, replacing damaged furniture and appliances, health care and more.

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There for the Long Haul: Helping Milton Survivors and Their Communities Recover

One year since the state was hit by back-to-back hurricanes, the American Red Cross continues to support long-term recovery efforts in Florida. In addition to providing direct financial assistance to households whose homes were severely damaged or destroyed by Hurricane Milton, we are also supporting community partner organizations with the expertise to help meet specialized response and recovery needs.

“We are incredibly grateful to the Red Cross. These centers will play an instrumental role in ensuring that our residents are not only survivors, but also stronger and more efficient after experiencing this program.”

**DR. CHAMAIN
MOSS-TORRES,
OF THE COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION OF
TAMPA, INC.**

Grants to Community Partners: Red Cross response and recovery grants focus on supporting individual, family and community needs. This could include direct support for hurricane survivors, such as home repair, food security needs, mental health programming and legal advocacy, as well as aid to the impacted communities—from empowering community members to inform and guide recovery efforts, to developing and implementing a range of preparedness and resilience initiatives.

So far, the Red Cross has disbursed approximately **\$2.5 million in response impact grants and long-term recovery grants** to help the people and communities impacted by Hurricane Milton, with more to come.

For example, **The Community Development Corporation of Tampa** (CDC of Tampa) has been awarded nearly \$1 million to establish three Disaster Recovery Centers, standalone community-run sites, serving Hillsborough and Pinellas counties—which were heavily impacted by hurricanes Helene and Milton.

“We are incredibly grateful to the Red Cross,” said Dr. Chamain Moss-Torres, chief operating officer, CDC of Tampa, Inc. “These centers will play an instrumental role in ensuring that our residents are not only survivors, but also stronger and more efficient after experiencing this program.”

We have also provided a long-term recovery grant to **Indian River Habitat for Humanity**, supporting its work to help uninsured and underinsured residents of Indian River County repair their storm-damaged homes.

“You have probably noticed there are still many blue tarps in the community,” said Karyn Bryant, director of neighborhood revitalization for Indian River Habitat for Humanity. “The partnership [with the] American Red Cross is a godsend to complete much-needed critical home repairs, especially roofs, to secure families’ homes for an additional 20+ years.”

Members of the Red Cross recovery team and the Greater Pine Island Alliance (GPIA) meet with disaster survivors in the wake of Hurricane Ian in 2022. Following the back-to-back impacts of Helene and Milton, the Red Cross is again supporting the GPIA, which is helping community residents with repairs to hurricane-damaged homes, as well as other community recovery groups across the region. Photo by Jillian Robertson/American Red Cross



Building Community Resilience: Another focus of our Hurricane Milton work is increasing the capacity of locally led Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs) through grants. These investments will not only speed recovery in the immediate term, but these groups will also endure after our operation ends and be ready to reactivate if future disasters strike their communities.

Notably, we are supporting every LTRG operating on Florida's Atlantic coast. The Red Cross is also resuming partnerships with LTRGs in multiple southwestern Florida counties that we supported during our response to Hurricane Ian, which impacted many of the same areas in October 2022. This includes LTRGs like the Greater Pine Island Alliance, which is supporting residents of a small island community who continue to recover from the compounding damage caused by three hurricanes over the last three years.

And, while not directly funded by Hurricane Milton donations, several hyper-local partners supported through the Red Cross Community Adaptation Program also provided critical services to neighborhoods with the greatest needs after the storm. For example, the Gladiolus Food Pantry, based in Fort Myers, was out the day after Milton struck to deliver water, food and ice to people who could not evacuate and now had no power.

Founder and Executive Director of the food pantry, Miriam Ortiz, and her crew of volunteers were able to stay up and running after the hurricane hit, thanks to a new generator provided by the Red Cross. "Just imagine having a hurricane, and nobody has electricity," said Miriam. "We can have our big walk-in freezer full of ice or meat or things people need."

"Hurricane Milton highlights the importance of investing in local communities, both financially and with our time, and helping them build recovery capacity," said Robbie Sofaly, director of our Helene Milton long-term recovery operation. "Repetitive impact, and the complexity it presents ..., is no more evident than in the communities Milton devastated, which were still recovering from Hurricane Ian."

"We've already seen the difference this time," Robbie added, "with communities made stronger by preparedness activities and quicker to activate long-term recovery groups to support their own recovery. We are proud of our role in facilitating those efforts, alongside our partners."

"Hurricane Milton highlights the importance of investing in local communities, both financially and with our time, and helping them build recovery capacity:"

**ROBBIE SOFALY,
DIRECTOR OF LONG-TERM
RECOVERY FOR THE
RED CROSS HURRICANE
MILTON RESPONSE**

In addition to purchasing a generator for the Gladiolus Food Pantry, a partner in our Community Adaptation Program, a Red Cross emergency response vehicle was on hand to provide warm meals and water as local residents lined up at the Fort Myers food pantry following Hurricane Milton's destructive landfall. Gladiolus was one of several Red Cross partners in South Florida who played an important role in helping people after the storm. Photo by Marcia Antipa/American Red Cross



Compassionate Supporters Power Relief and Recovery for Milton Survivors

Thanks to generous supporters, the Red Cross has raised \$13.0 million designated for our Hurricane Milton response to help people impacted by this disaster — including the value of critical donated goods and services. As of September 9, 2025, the Red Cross had already spent or made commitments to spend approximately \$24.9 million on emergency relief and recovery efforts for Hurricane Milton. To fill this gap, and to continue to support the long-term recovery needs of people and communities affected by Hurricane Milton in the months to come, the Red Cross is also using funds from our combined Hurricanes Milton and Helene designation.¹

Hurricane Milton Expenses and Commitments ^{2,3} (in millions)						
As of September 9, 2025						
Expense Categories	Food, Shelter and Relief Items	Health and Emotional Support	Financial Assistance	Community Recovery & Resilience	Total	Expense %
Long-term recovery programs to help unmet needs	—	—	\$5.3	\$2.5	\$7.8	32%
Deployment of volunteers and staff (includes airfare, lodging, meals and vehicles)	\$3.8	\$0.6	\$0.9	—	\$5.3	21%
Financial assistance, food, shelter and other relief items	\$3.3	\$0.1	\$1.5	—	\$4.9	20%
Full-time Red Cross employees	\$0.8	—	\$0.1	\$0.4	\$1.3	5%
Temporary disaster hires	\$0.3	—	\$0.1	\$0.6	\$1.0	4%
Freight, postage and warehousing	\$0.8	—	—	—	\$0.8	3%
IT, communications and call centers	\$0.5	—	\$0.2	—	\$0.7	3%
Kitchen, shelter and other logistics that enable service delivery	\$0.2	—	\$0.1	—	\$0.3	1%
Equipment, maintenance and fueling of Red Cross emergency vehicles and rented trucks	\$0.3	—	—	—	\$0.3	1%
Total Program Expenses	\$10.0	\$0.7	\$8.2	\$3.5	\$22.4	90%
Management, general and fundraising ⁴					\$2.5	10%
Total Spent and Committed					\$24.9	100%

¹ As of September 9, 2025, the Red Cross had raised \$51.7 million for the combined Hurricanes Milton and Helene designation.

² Dollar figures are rounded to the nearest \$100,000; therefore, expenses \$49,999 and below are represented as zero.

³ Includes expenses that will be reimbursed by the State of Florida.

⁴ Management, 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 and payroll systems to support nearly 18,000 employees and more than 265,000 volunteers, fundraising and communications functions, and other support services across all program lines. Ninety cents of every dollar spent for Hurricane Milton will support the delivery of care and comfort for people affected by this disaster.



Thank you!



**American
Red Cross**

Your Support Made a Real Difference

The extraordinary generosity of the public has helped tens of thousands in need before, during and after Hurricane Milton.

The Red Cross must be ready for every disaster, big or small, and we respond to an average of more than 60,000 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 and the people we've helped, please visit our **Hurricane Milton Stewardship Story Map** at redcross.org/hurricane-milton.



**American
Red Cross**

Above: Red Cross Volunteer Essie Hopkins embraces shelter resident Agnes Ritz at the Ross Norton Recreation Center shelter in Clearwater, Florida. Agnes was forced from her home when Hurricane Milton devastated her small community, just weeks after Hurricane Helene brought damaging winds and rain. Photo by Marko Kocic/
American Red Cross