

Red Cross Currents

November 2021



American Red Cross
Massachusetts

Update your Vaccination Status in Volunteer Connection

The American Red Cross requires that all volunteers with in-person assignments and activities be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 by Dec. 31. (This requirement does not apply to volunteers working virtually.)



This information is critical in helping to ensure that you can continue in your current roles and activities.

Please log into Volunteer Connection today and update your profile. If you have previously recorded your status, you still need to update your status and upload your supporting documentation. If you need help with uploading your vaccine card, please contact sara.ponticelli@redcross.org.

If you remain unvaccinated after the deadline but wish to continue volunteering with the Red Cross, reach out to your volunteer supervisor about virtual-only opportunities.



Help the Red Cross Overcome a Blood and Platelet Shortage

With the holidays fast approaching, the American Red Cross urges donors to continue to make and keep appointments now and in the weeks ahead.

This will help us overcome the ongoing emergency blood and platelet shortage significantly impacting the nation's blood supply. **The current blood supply is the lowest the Red Cross has seen at this time of year in more than a decade.**

Since declaring an emergency need for donors last month, thousands of people have come to Red Cross blood drives in Massachusetts and across the country to roll up a sleeve and help patients who are counting on lifesaving transfusions.

The Red Cross is incredibly grateful for the kindness and generosity of these blood and platelet donors, but hospital demand remains strong.

At least 10,000 more donations are needed each week in the coming weeks to meet patient needs during the holiday season, which always presents seasonal challenges to blood collection.



Donors are urged to schedule an appointment now via three available options:

- **Use the Red Cross Blood Donor App**
- **Visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org)**
- **Call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767)**

Making a blood or platelet donation is a simple act of kindness with a huge ripple effect. Donate now to help meet the needs of hospital patients this holiday season.

Don't wait—make your appointment to donate.

Dover Student Wins Red Cross Scholarship

Rebekkah Perrine of Dover helped save lives by hosting an American Red Cross blood drive, and earned a \$1,000 scholarship as a result of her lifesaving efforts.

As part of the Red Cross *Leaders Save Lives* program, Rebekkah hosted a blood drive at the American Legion in Dover on July 25, which collected 38 blood donations. As a result, she was eligible to be entered into a drawing for a scholarship and was chosen as a winner. Rebekkah was also awarded a gift card.

The *Leaders Save Lives* program encourages community-minded high school and college students to host blood drives to help maintain the blood supply for patients in need of lifesaving transfusions.



Students can sign up to host *Leaders Save Lives* blood drives during several seasonal timeframes throughout the year. For more information, visit [RedCrossBlood.org/LeadersSaveLives](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org/LeadersSaveLives).

How to donate blood

You have four easy ways to make an appointment or to get more information:

- **Download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App**
- **Visit [RedCrossBlood.org](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org)**
- **Call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767)**
- **Enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device**

All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver's license, or two other forms of identification, are required at check-in. Anyone 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds, and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass[®] to complete their pre-donation online reading and health history questionnaire, on the day of their donation, before arriving at the blood drive. To get started, follow the instructions at [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](https://www.RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass) or use the Blood Donor App.

Boston Food Pantry Provides Thanksgiving Meals for 3,000+ Families

The Saturday before Thanksgiving is always a festive and busy day for staff and volunteers at the Red Cross Boston Food Pantry. This year, two dozen volunteers provided food for more than 3,000 families at our Roxbury location on Massachusetts Avenue.

The morning food distribution saw long lines of cars and walk-ups, as people queued to receive food for the upcoming holiday. Volunteers moved up and down the line-up of cars, signing in people and sending them to one of four loading stations where volunteers provided contactless delivery to those in need. Walk-ups used the opposite side of the street sidewalk to receive food from volunteers. In just over three hours, volunteers served 1,934 families.

Later that day, a partnership with the Boston Public Schools and YMCA provided delivered food to nearly 1,100 families of registered school children. Red Cross volunteers helped load food in cars for further delivery in Dorchester and Roxbury.

Throughout the global pandemic, the Boston Food Pantry has seen a marked increase in clients in need. We are working with partners and suppliers, such as the Greater Boston Food Bank, to help those in need worry less about food, and focus on family and nutrition.



New Partnership with City of Brockton

The Red Cross of Massachusetts recently forged a new, ongoing partnership with the city of Brockton. This partnership, led by the mayor's office, includes many agencies that will come together to support the entire Brockton community when disaster strikes, such as fires in the city.

This partnership started with a recent major fire in Brockton Oct. 27. The Red Cross responded to this 3-alarm fire at 312 North Main Street by opening 17 cases for 23 clients. The Red Cross's new partnership with the city of Brockton was instrumental in service delivery.

The Red Cross thanks the city of Brockton for opening the War Memorial building for intake, and Brockton Area Transit for providing a bus for immediate comfort and transportation to the intake location. Many thanks also go out to the Cape Verdean association, who were instrumental in providing translation services for the clients and the recovery team as we began to support the clients in their recovery.

Unfortunately, clients were unable to get back into their multi-family home, which will be torn

Veterans Day Remembrance in Massachusetts

Massachusetts Service to the Armed Forces (SAF) volunteers honored those who served our nation across the state this past Veterans Day.

A large group of volunteers gathered in Bourne at the Massachusetts National Cemetery on Cape Cod Nov. 6, to help plant flags on veteran markers. Volunteers from all over Southeast Massachusetts fanned out across the 750-acre facility that lies adjacent to Joint Base Cape Cod. Red Cross volunteers also staffed a canteen tent serving hot coffee and other refreshments to the dozens of people who came out to honor the men and women who served our nation so proudly.

Meanwhile that same day, 70 miles to the northwest in Boston, Red Cross SAF volunteers marched in the city's Veterans Day Parade. Volunteers carried a Red Cross flag and banner as well as numerous American flags. Near City Hall, newly elected Boston Mayor Michelle Wu joined the team of volunteers to thank them for their participation in the city's parade honoring our nation's veterans.

The Massachusetts region of the American Red Cross SAF division regularly offers free virtual

down due to the fire. However, “all tenants were taken care of,” wrote Rhonda McLaughlin, DAT supervisor, in her report.

Fire Coordination Fosters Dialog

This fire coordination fosters a dialog between the Red Cross, the city of Brockton, and other agencies that can help support the people of their community. Whenever a need arises, the fire department contacts the Red Cross, which then coordinates with other agencies to provide services.

“All partner agencies come together right away and everyone does their part. The Red Cross performs immediate recovery, and advocates for clients. These relationships are vital to help people recover from disasters in a timely fashion,” says Bonnie Norton, Regional Recovery Program Lead.

“By coordinating services, we can work together and provide services faster. This is better for clients’ recovery and stability,” added Norton.

workshops aimed at building resiliency among our service members, veterans, and their family members. A licensed mental health professional from our SAF team facilitates these live discussions. To find out more, visit <https://www.redcross.org/local/massachusetts/about-us/our-work/resiliency-workshops.html>.



SAF Collecting Clothing/ Personal Care Items through End of Year

Service to the Armed Forces (SAF) staff and volunteers need your help collecting warm winter clothes and personal care items for our nation’s veterans in need.

SAF currently has two programs to help our veterans, collecting: (1) winter essentials for homeless veterans, and (2) personal care items for veterans at various Veterans Administration facilities and other sites across the state.

Totes for Hope will deliver the collected items, assembled into tote bags, to veterans who are undergoing personal adversities.

Items needed are:

- Winter boots/shoes
- Socks
- Coats
- Sweatpants and sweatshirts
- Winter hats, gloves, and scarfs
- Raincoats and rain ponchos
- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Hand sanitizer
- Travel-size shaving cream
- Baby wipes
- Disinfectant wipes
- Soap or travel-size body wash

- Dental floss
- Deodorant
- Hairbrushes/combs
- Travel-size shampoo and conditioner
- Travel-size baby powder
- Travel-size petroleum jelly
- Men's and women's underwear
- Prescription caddies
- Restaurant or coffee gift cards (allows veteran to get out of the rain)
- Drawstring bags and backpacks
- Phone cards
- Crossword puzzles and activity books
- Magazines and books
- Pocket calendars
- \$5 Dunkin' gift cards (gives veterans a chance to warm up and get out of the winter weather)

We also ask that you include a personal note of encouragement with your donation that will be delivered along with the Tote for Hope. Your generosity will help brighten the spirit of our veterans who are in need.

Please mail items to:

Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces
381 Plantation Drive
Worcester, MA 01605



Volunteer Recognition Event

We look forward to seeing you!

Join us for our end-of-year drive-thru recognition event, on **Sat, Dec. 11, from 10 am to noon**.
To thank all our wonderful volunteers, we have a gift for each of you!

To RSVP, click:

https://volunteerconnection.redcross.org/?nd=vms_load_form&form_id=10536&return_nd=vms_form_list

New Volunteer Orientation

Attention all new volunteers!

Please join us at our next Red Cross New Volunteer Orientation, held virtually via Microsoft Teams, on either:

- Wednesday, Dec. 15, from 4 to 5 pm

or

- Thursday, Dec. 16, from 12 to 1 pm

Everyone is welcome! This half-hour presentation provides an overview of the American Red Cross, including:

- Our lines of service
- Massachusetts region
- Volunteer Connection

Afterwards, you'll have an opportunity for open conversation and questions.

You can register for this training on the MA Regional Calendar. To access this calendar:

- Sign into Volunteer Connection.
- In the top menu bar, click on [My Shifts](#) and [MA Regional Calendar](#).

Once registered, you'll receive a Microsoft Teams link.

For more information, email Sara.Ponticelli@redcross.org.

Native American Heritage Month

When Erin Tapahe, Diné (Navajo), completed the Boston Marathon on Oct. 11, it was a personal triumph for herself—but meant much more because the 125th running of the marathon was held on Indigenous Peoples' Day.



“Being able to run on Indigenous Peoples' Day was really important for me,” said Erin.

“To be able to represent my people helped me make the decision to begin training for Boston.”

2021 had already been a busy running year for Erin. She had completed the 300-plus mile *Running is Medicine* relay race in May and the *Utah Valley Marathon* in June. Friends Erin had made during training earlier in the year encouraged her to consider the 2021 Boston Marathon.

“I had to get back into training faster than most people would following a marathon,” said Erin.

However, the thought of being able to run Boston on a day set aside to celebrate and honor Native American peoples, and commemorate their histories and cultures, was what focused her to commit to her training.

Erin received overwhelming support in her training and fundraising with Team Red Cross. “With the race being on Indigenous Peoples' Day, people were very supportive and helped me reach my fundraising goal.”

Erin's first exposure to the Red Cross mission came during high school where local blood drives were held. At the time, she was considering a career in health care and saw how maintaining a stable blood supply was important to local communities.

For more than 10 years, Team Red Cross has helped support the mission of the American Red Cross in Massachusetts by fielding a team of motivated individuals to run for a cause. This year's team raised more than \$260,000 to support our mission to relieve suffering in the wake of disasters across the United States.

Keep Us Posted

Please send us your news and photos, and upcoming calendar events, to: News.RedCrossMA@redcross.org

Stay up-to-date on breaking news on our social channels and tag @RedCrossMA when you post about your Red Cross work!



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