

West Virginia Flooding

ONE MONTH UPDATE

AUGUST 3, 2016



**American
Red Cross**

Red Cross Supporting West Virginians Long After Waters Recede

On the evening of Thursday, June 23 a derecho storm brought strong winds, intense rainfall and severe flooding to communities throughout West Virginia. This deluge, the third-deadliest flooding event on record for the state, prompted widespread destruction to infrastructure and the need for dozens of swift water rescues. Tragically, 24 people lost their lives after getting caught in the floodwaters. More than 2,400 homes were destroyed or damaged beyond repair.

The American Red Cross has been there for West Virginians since the initial onslaught, coordinating a massive relief operation to help individuals and families in need. A month later, as people continue to muck out and clean up their homes, the Red Cross remains to support individuals and families coping with the devastating disaster that impacted communities so greatly.

More than 850 Red Crossers, both volunteers and staff, have opened shelters, served meals, distributed relief supplies and met with people one-on-one to address individualized needs. To date, the Red Cross has opened more than 1,800 cases to help individuals and families through the recovery process. Health service workers have ensured that functional and access needs are addressed. Caseworkers continue to meet with families to help them create recovery plans and connect with additional government and partner resources. Red Cross disaster mental health workers are providing emotional support and a shoulder to lean on throughout West Virginians journey back to a sense of normalcy.

“We have transitioned away from shelters to more permanent housing opportunities for all the clients who were in our shelters,” said Regional Chief Executive Officer Erica Mani. “We are now doing casework in the field and at fixed locations.”

The Red Cross is working with state and local officials, as well as community partners, to ensure people get the help they need. To address housing needs, Red Cross



*Red Cross worker Marko Kovic surveys the damage to homes destroyed by flooding that then caught fire in White Sulphur Springs.
Photo Credit: Daniel Cima / American Red Cross*

caseworkers are helping to connect flooding victims with resources available through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The Red Cross has also worked with nonprofit partners such as the Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation, a worldwide volunteer-based humanitarian organization, whose members distributed debit cards to people already working with the Red Cross and had suffered damages from the flooding.

Through it all, Mani said she's proud of the role the Red Cross has led in the recovery process. She said even more heartening has been the attitude of victims.

“I have been so amazed at the resilience of our West Virginians affected by this flood,” Mani said. “Everyone we've talked to about this flood has been hopeful and appreciative.”

Volunteers Provide Lifesaving Support to Impacted Residents

Robert Britt, an emergency medical technician from Union, New Jersey, is just one example of a volunteer who offered his time and expertise to make certain impacted residents were taken care of. Robert was part of an Emergency Response Vehicle (ERV) crew that traveled around rural roads of West Virginia, offering relief items and support services to people in their neighborhoods. In addition to providing material relief resources, such as mops, buckets, shovels, insect repellent and water, Robert was also able to provide basic first aid and medical assistance.

One area resident, Carolyn Harper, met with Robert and his team and quickly realized that she could have a medical professional examine her leg, which had been scraped in the cleanup process. While Carolyn sat in the back of the ERV, Robert cleaned and bandaged her cuts. He didn't find any serious problems with Carolyn's legs, but suggested she see her physician just to play it safe. Like scores of others living in flooded areas, Carolyn's cuts and scratches, if left untreated, could become infected.

"Thanks for your help, I really didn't expect it, but I appreciate all of it," Carolyn shared as she was leaving the ERV after her medical checkup, and with an armload of new cleanup supplies.

Response at a Glance

The American Red Cross has been helping thousands of people in West Virginia since severe storms began June 23.



More than **198,400**
meals and snacks
served



More than **133,700**
relief items distributed



More than **2,300**
overnight shelter
stays supported



More than **1,800**
cases opened

—Cumulative figures as of August 2, 2016

Thank You

The Red Cross mission is to alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies. Through nearly 66,000 disasters each 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. Your donation helps us bring comfort in the wake of disasters and helps provide the resources to guide those affected through recovery and become better prepared for future emergencies. We are grateful for your trust.