



**American  
Red Cross**

## 2019 California Wildfires

Six-Month Update 2020

### Red Cross Supports California Residents Affected By Wildfires

In fall 2019, wildfires once again raged across California, burning nearly 200,000 acres of land and driving hundreds of thousands of residents to flee their homes. In Southern California, powerful Santa Ana winds combined with dry conditions to create swift fire growth and extreme fire behavior. Multiple large blazes, including the Getty Fire, Tick Fire and Saddleridge Fire, destroyed thousands of acres as residents hastened to evacuate. Terrifying video footage showed columns of flames jumping across roads and freeways.

Northern California battled the Kincade Fire, the largest wildfire ever to occur in Sonoma County. Dry conditions, high-wind events and the fast-moving wildfire led to the unprecedented evacuation of nearly 190,000 residents, more than a third of the county's population. For residents who had survived the deadly Tubbs Fire only two years before, experiencing another evacuation was especially traumatic. The Kincade Fire destroyed 175 homes and burned an area more than twice the size of San Francisco in the two weeks before it was fully contained.

Throughout it all, the generosity of our donors enabled the Red Cross to be there, providing emergency relief and supporting our neighbors to get back on their feet. We quickly opened shelters, where guests received a place to sleep, meals, comfort and the opportunity to reconnect with loved ones. Red Cross workers, 90% of whom are volunteers, were on hand providing emotional support, spiritual care and health services such as replacing lost medications.

Lynne Fredericks, who evacuated from Windsor along with her sister and their dog Jack, said she was amazed at how hard others were working to help the evacuees, all "with so much kindness and generosity". "I have not seen anyone be rude to somebody coming in. I always see them being helpful," she said.

This kindness and generosity were on full display at the Red Cross shelter in Santa Rosa. When workers there realized that the children staying in their shelter were going to miss Halloween, they quickly mobilized to create a fun-filled holiday celebration. On Halloween, costumed children enjoyed crafts, jack-o'-lanterns, face painting, a visit from the Oakland Raiders mascot and of course, candy.

The attentive work done by the Red Cross to support evacuees did not go unappreciated. Even after the third night spent in the shelter, Lynne Fredericks was grateful. "I am in awe of how you have been able to put all this together and make it work," she said.



## Red Cross Assistance Helps Families Recover From Wildfires

KerryAnn Laufer lost her home in Northern California's Kincade Fire, but her experience with the American Red Cross at the Local Assistance Center in Healdsburg helped her when she needed it most.

"I'm so grateful for the Red Cross. You guys bailed me out when I wasn't in a good place," she said of her visit to the assistance center. The mental health worker who assisted Laufer "was so kind and so patient," Laufer reported. The worker walked Laufer through the sign-up process and had transferred financial assistance to Laufer's bank account by the end of the conversation.

"It let me know things are happening, there are people here who are helping me," Laufer said of the experience. "It calmed me down and let me know everything was OK."

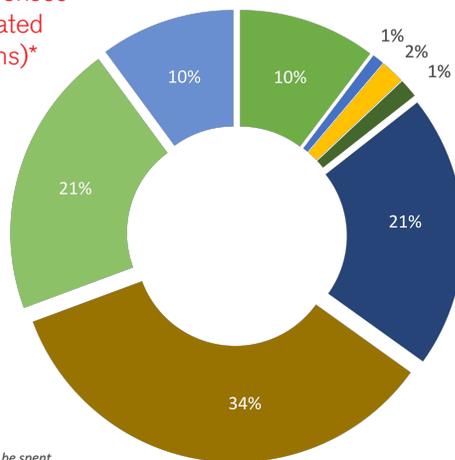
Local assistance centers like the one KerryAnn Laufer visited are just one of the ways that the American Red Cross is helping those affected by the 2019 California wildfires get back on their feet. As evacuees began to return home,

Red Cross volunteers distributed relief items such as water, shovels, trash bags and dust masks in neighborhoods devastated by the Kincade Fire.

The generosity of Red Cross donors also allows us to provide hundreds of wildfire survivors financial assistance totaling more than \$1.3 million. This assistance helps meet urgent needs such as buying groceries and replacing lost clothes, as well as home repairs and construction. The Red Cross plans ongoing support of individual and household needs, outreach to under-served populations, capacity building of local community agencies, and preparedness and resiliency efforts.

Laufer said that although her home was destroyed, she still feels lucky. And she has a message for the Red Cross: "Thank you for being there. I don't know if I could have hung in there and done it if you guys hadn't been there."

California Wildfires 2019 Expenses and Commitments & Estimated Recovery Budget (in millions)\*



\*as of April 30, 2020  
\*\* Estimated program funds to be spent

- Food, Shelter and Relief Items: \$620,000
- Health and Emotional Support: \$62,000
- Individual Emergency Assistance and Recovery: \$124,000
- Community Recovery: \$62,000
- Individual Emergency Assistance and Recovery: \$1,300,000\*\*
- Community Recovery: \$2,108,000\*\*
- Disaster Preparedness: \$1,300,000\*\*
- Management, General and Fundraising: \$620,000

### Response at a Glance

More than 600 trained disaster workers mobilized to provide care and comfort to residents affected by the 2019 California wildfires.



**More than 4,800 individual care contacts made**



**More than 58,600 meals and snacks served with partners**



**More than 11,400 overnight shelter stays provided with partners**

—Cumulative figures as of March 19, 2020