



**American
Red Cross**

Youth Engagement

Working with Your Red Cross Region



Overview

Providing assistance for those in need; empowering local communities to prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies; and collecting and distributing critical blood products to hospitals throughout the country are just some examples of the services delivered by the American Red Cross. In order to maximize the response capacity, the Red Cross relies on a well-established local structure that includes Red Cross Regions and Service to the Armed Forces (SAF) stations.

These tremendous acts of service are possible due to the support of incredibly dedicated volunteers. All Red Cross Regions rely on volunteers to carry out their services in the local community. Youth volunteers make up a vital part of our volunteer workforce.

Your Red Cross Club can play an important role in helping the Red Cross Region in your community deliver critical services. As your Club is an extension of the local region, you will need to connect with your local Red Cross Region. Creating a strong partnership and working with your local region adds value and builds capacity for your Club. This guide will help you to build a connection with the local Red Cross and make the most of your partnership.

Before we send you to knock on the door of your local Red Cross, we need to make sure you have a good understanding of what a local Red Cross Region stands for and what is the easiest way to connect.

Your local Red Cross Region should be the nearest region office, blood donation center or Service to the Armed Forces (SAF) station to where you live.

- **A Red Cross Region** is the physical region that oversees Red Cross activities and services for a given geographic area. Depending on the community's needs, the region will provide services related to health and safety, disaster preparedness and response, Service to the Armed Forces and International Services.
- **A Blood Donation Center** oversees all Red Cross blood collection in a given geographic area. It collects, processes and distributes blood to hospitals and provides the gift of life for those in need. Blood donation centers and regions oftentimes work hand-in-hand to ensure blood collection is carried out throughout the Red Cross Region's geographic region.
- **An SAF Station** is a Red Cross office located on a military installation or in a military hospital. SAF Station employees and volunteers provide direct services to service members and their families.

Look Out! *Regions can be structured differently as every area works to address the needs of their community. It is important for you to become very familiar with how your local Red Cross Region works and what key services are provided in the community.*

In order to deliver critical services, regions are responsible for managing volunteers—this includes you!

When connecting and working with the local Red Cross Region you will want to take the following steps:

Connect	Inform	Collaborate	Share & Report
Establish a contact with the local region and initiate a regular communication process.	Share relevant information on your club membership, structure and upcoming projects.	Maintain communication and work together to implement relevant projects and initiatives.	Keep your Red Cross Region up to date with that your club is doing and enter your Club activities in Volunteer Connection.

Connect

Find the Closest Red Cross Region to you.

- Visit [redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org) and click on “Find Your Local Red Cross” at the top right side of the screen.

Identify the correct contact person in the local Red Cross Region.

- When you contact your Red Cross Region, ask to speak with the person who works with youth volunteers. This person is commonly the Volunteer Engagement Specialist or Youth Engagement Lead. If interested in working with biomedical services, be sure to ask your region contact to get in touch with the correct biomedical representative.
- If you have an existing Club, please confirm the contact information for your Red Cross Region at the beginning of the new school year.

Initiate communication—express your intent to start a Club or continue your Red Cross Club.

- **New Club:** You can either call or email the contact person in the local Region. Your initial communication should include:
 - Short introduction
 - Your intent to start a Red Cross Club
 - Your desire to have a meeting with the local Red Cross Region
- **Existing Club:** Before school starts and before the first Club or Executive Board meeting, touch base with your local Red Cross Region and gather relevant updates that might impact your Red Cross Club. Confirm who will be your Red Cross Region Contact for the school year.

Steps to Starting to Plan Your Projects

Schedule a meeting with your Red Cross Region Contact

- Make sure to provide accurate information on how you can be contacted and follow up promptly.
- If the meeting is taking place at your school, make sure to secure the space.
- Prepare an agenda and have clear items on what needs to be discussed.
- **New Club:** Invite all your peers interested in starting the Club. You should invite your potential sponsor to join the meeting.
- **Existing Club:** Ensure that your Executive Board will participate in this meeting. It gives you the opportunity to coordinate your upcoming initiatives with the local Region.

Gather information on existing requirements for starting a Red Cross Club.

- Learn how to become a registered Red Cross volunteer, if you are not one already.
- Find out how to register your Red Cross Club on Volunteer Connection.
- **New Club:** Make sure that all members of your Executive Board are registered volunteers with the local region. If they are over 18, this will include a background check. Make sure there is not an existing Red Cross Club at your school. Each school can only have one Red Cross Club.
- **Existing Club:** Verify with the local Region if there are any new policies or requirements for Red Cross Clubs or youth volunteers.

Register your Club members as Red Cross volunteers.

- It is important for the local Region to have accurate information on the number of youth volunteers involved. Your support is vital to getting everyone registered.
- All Club members should register on Volunteer Connection and will need to complete a Volunteer Orientation.
- Remember any time spent travelling, attending meetings or checking emails should be logged on Volunteer Connection.
- **Existing Club:** Make sure any members that recently joined the Club are registered as volunteers on Volunteer Connection.

Collaborate

Schedule periodic meetings with your Red Cross Region Contact and Club members.

- Secure a time that works best for your Club members and for your Red Cross Region Contact.
- You can either have the meeting at the local region or at your school. If possible, invite the sponsor/advisor to join the meeting.
- Check to see if your Red Cross Region has regularly scheduled calls or meetings for all the Clubs in your area.

Discuss upcoming projects and ask for guidance and informational resources.

- Identify joint projects and the Club's specific support needs.
- Share your Club's inventory, including your available resources (e.g., school financial support, access to printing, meeting rooms, club members with technical skills), and existing needs (e.g., someone with marketing experience, access to meeting space, someone to provide guidance on your fundraising, etc.). It is important to establish the availability of your resources and verify what is realistic to expect in terms of concrete support from the local Region.

Develop your Club's calendar of activities and share it with the local Red Cross Region.

- Based on the identified needs, together with your Club members you will select a number of projects to be implemented by your Club throughout the school year.
- Develop your yearly calendar of activities. The local Region can help you create a calendar that aligns with Red Cross monthly focus areas and existing regional events.
- Post all your upcoming events and activities on your Red Cross Club GroupShare calendar on Volunteer Connection.
- Make sure to share the Club's calendar of activities with your Red Cross Region Contact.
- If you plan to implement a large-scale event and you are relying on the local Region's support, please ensure that you clearly communicate all your support needs well in advance and you follow up on your requests.
- **Existing Club:** Try to capitalize on recurring projects and gain more support in your school and at the local Region.

Inform and coordinate with your Red Cross Region all events implemented by your club.

- Ensure that you maintain constant communication with your local Red Cross Region.
- When appropriate and possible, attempt to collaborate with other Red Cross Clubs on projects/events.
- Allow appropriate time for planning events and scheduling training classes with your local Region.
- Special notes for fundraisers:
 - Coordinate with your local Red Cross Region before soliciting in-kind or monetary donations. There may be preexisting relationships that you should be aware of.
 - Carefully review all written donation requests to ensure high quality before sending to potential donors.
 - Document donor information and forward to your local Red Cross, especially if the donor requests a tax receipt.
 - Ask your Red Cross Region Contact to review all verbiage you are planning to use to solicit funds from peers or members of the community.

Report

Submit Club Activities

- Make sure to share with the local Region accurate information on projects and activities implemented throughout the year, the number of volunteers, etc. Submit all your Club events through Volunteer Connection.
- **Existing Club:** Be ready to share information on accomplishments and success stories with your local Region. You can help highlight successful youth involvement stories and help your Club and local Region build visibility.

Handle money with care

- Coordinate with your local Red Cross to develop an annual Club budget (preferably at the beginning of the year).
- Always have two or more Club members (at least one officer) handling money at any given time.
- Maintain an accurate list of all financial activities.



Contact your local Red Cross Region for more information.

Impact Starts Here