



**American  
Red Cross**

# Hurricane Irma

One-Year Update | September 2018





Coming less than two weeks after Hurricane Harvey, **Irma was the strongest hurricane to make landfall in the U.S. since 2005.**

More than **7,000 American Red Cross disaster workers** from across the U.S.—over 90 percent volunteers—mounted a massive response to help impacted residents in the U.S. Virgin Islands, Florida and states across the Southeast.

They provided shelter, relief and comfort for families like Vincent, Shalfonda and their daughter Serenity, who found calm amid the storm at a Red Cross shelter in Miami.

Above: Photo by Marko Kovic/American Red Cross. Cover: Dennis Thompson, 62, a long-time resident of the Florida Keys, shares a moment with a Red Cross worker. He is using Red Cross financial assistance to help with repairs to his home. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross.

## A Letter from Gail McGovern, President and CEO, American Red Cross

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In September 2017, Hurricane Irma caused heartbreaking destruction from the U.S. Virgin Islands to Florida and the Southeast. Despite the massive response already underway for Hurricane Harvey, thousands of American Red Cross volunteers stepped up to bring aid and comfort to people with urgent needs, providing shelter, food, relief supplies and emotional support. One year later, we continue to stand with Irma survivors as they recover and rebuild their lives.

When I visited Florida shortly after Irma struck, I met so many people facing some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable, and I was deeply moved by their spirit and courage. I also saw the tremendous impact that dedicated volunteers and donors, from all walks of life, made to help families cope with stress and loss.

At a shelter I visited in Immokalee, many residents were agricultural workers who spoke little English. I met a Creole-speaker who had sought refuge with us in the shelter and became a spontaneous Red Cross volunteer, as an interpreter for many Haitian-born residents. I witnessed another community volunteer, who brought his shaved ice machine to the shelter, serving snow cones for hours in the sweltering heat and delighting long lines of children who were there with their families. In addition to selfless local volunteers, we also received vital support from sister Red Cross societies worldwide—including a Danish Red Cross team that set up a camp for our relief workers on Big Pine Key.

Thanks to the caring individuals who stepped up to support their neighbors and the extraordinary compassion of donors who gave so generously, the Red Cross helped thousands in their darkest hours. These contributions empowered us to provide safe shelter, nourishing meals and essential relief supplies for affected families, along with health services, emotional support and so much more. Generous donations also made it possible for the Red Cross to remain by the sides of Irma survivors long after news cameras had moved on. We visited impacted neighborhoods to help people as they cleaned up damaged homes, and we met with others to provide assistance for their most pressing needs.

As affected individuals and families continue to pick up the pieces and rebuild their lives, the Red Cross is there to deliver ongoing aid. We're providing financial assistance for households in need of support and whose homes experienced major damage or were destroyed by the hurricane. We're also awarding grants to partner organizations that are doing important recovery work in local communities, and we're supporting Long-Term Recovery Committees to identify and help address residents' unmet needs.

It's been a very difficult year for Irma survivors, and many people still have a long journey ahead before their recovery is complete. But thanks to our compassionate donors and selfless volunteers, the Red Cross will be there to provide help and hope for tomorrow. On behalf of those we serve, thank you.

Gail McGovern



## Red Cross Delivers Help and Hope in Irma's Wake

Hurricane Irma's powerful winds and floodwaters pummeled communities in the Caribbean, including the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico, before carving a destructive path across Florida and beyond. Millions evacuated as the massive hurricane threatened South Florida, where raking winds and surging waters devastated the Keys before causing widespread damage across the state. The deadly storm damaged tens of thousands of homes and left millions of residents without power.

In response, thousands of dedicated Red Cross volunteers and employees—both from local communities and across the country—joined with our partners to shelter tens of thousands of people who sought refuge from the storm. Through Irma's ferocious impact and the ensuing cleanup, they provided food, relief supplies, health services and a comforting presence for hurricane survivors.

### Shelter

Millions took to the highways in Florida as Irma threatened. While many traveled to stay with relatives or checked into hotels, thousands of others had no place to go. The Red Cross worked closely with government and community partners to help staff disaster shelters in both Florida and the U.S. Virgin Islands, ensuring that impacted residents could find safe refuge, food and comfort.

From providing cots and blankets for shelter residents to preparing and serving their meals, compassionate volunteers worked day and night to support the needs of survivors, helping to relieve some of the burdens of a stressful and traumatic situation.

### Food

Basic comforts like meals and snacks meant so much to people living in crowded shelters, who were wondering what they would find when they returned home. And when storm-ravaged neighborhoods were safe to visit, Red Cross volunteers in our emergency response vehicles became a familiar sight, delivering hot meals, cold water, ice and more—meeting an urgent need for residents who went days and even weeks without power and had no way to prepare or store food.



Top: In Immokalee, Florida, families found refuge with the Red Cross after Hurricane Irma destroyed most of the town. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross. Bottom: In Fort Myers, Florida, families affected by Hurricane Irma receive hot meals from Red Cross volunteers. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross



More than **555,300** overnight shelter stays provided with partners



Over **1.6 million meals and snacks** served with partners





Top: In Big Pine Key, Florida, Hurricane Irma survivor Karis welcomes a visit and relief supplies delivered by Ken, a Red Cross volunteer, from Kansas. Marko Kocic/American Red Cross. Bottom: In Estero, Florida, shelter resident Gertrude is comforted by Red Cross volunteer Deborah, whose own house was destroyed by Irma. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross

## Relief Items

For many families who evacuated homes during Irma's approach or fled rising waters, there was no chance to pack essentials like toothpaste, soap, diapers, hygiene items and shampoo. To help with life's everyday necessities, the Red Cross provided comfort kits with basic personal items. We also distributed supplies like rakes, shovels and buckets, as well as bug spray and coolers as people began mucking out homes and cleaning up debris in the sweltering summer heat.

## Health Services and Emotional Support

Food, shelter and relief items are the most visible and tangible types of support we provide, but for people coping with the trauma of disaster, emotional support and a sympathetic ear may have an even greater impact. In Irma's aftermath, trained Red Cross mental health workers were on hand to provide comfort and help people find a new normal. Volunteer health workers also provided basic health services and helped survivors replace essentials like prescription medicine or lost eyeglasses.

## Bringing Aid to the U.S. Virgin Islands

In addition to our massive response to Hurricane Irma on the U.S. mainland, the Red Cross worked with partners to provide vital aid for residents in the U.S. Virgin Islands, where the islands of St. John and St. Thomas were devastated by a direct hit at the height of the storm's strength.

With communications and power out across the islands, individuals and families faced tremendous challenges following the hurricane. In the immediate aftermath, we worked to support sheltering for island residents who had lost their homes, as well as feeding and emotional support.

For some survivors—particularly those with serious medical needs—the difficulties were just beginning. Hospitals had been severely damaged and many families in hard-hit areas went weeks or even months without electrical power. The Red Cross assisted many island residents with medical needs who evacuated to the mainland for treatment.

The Red Cross also helped support residents like Jean Cottrell of St. John, who remained on the island, but needed electrical power to operate her medical devices. Jean, who lives in the severely impacted Coral Bay area, was first visited by Red Cross volunteers to assess her needs and later received a generator for her home. After living alone without power for weeks, she told us that she was grateful and felt safer in her home.



More than **1.8 million** relief items distributed



More than **62,500 health and mental health contacts** made<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>All numbers are cumulative and reflect Red Cross response efforts since September 6, 2017



## One Year Later: Red Cross Continues Helping Individuals and Communities Recover

As Irma survivors left shelters and returned to their homes, the Red Cross was already planning and preparing to meet longer-term recovery needs. One year after Hurricane Irma's devastating impact, the Red Cross continues to work with government and non-profit partners, community and faith-based organizations, and Long-Term Recovery Committees to support recovery for affected residents.

In the U.S. Virgin Islands, we are funding long-term recovery programs focused on community services, including youth preparedness training for grades 1 through 12; a community health initiative aimed at children, the elderly and disabled; and a micro-grant program to help small business farmers recover. In Florida, we are using donated dollars to provide financial assistance for households that need extra help and grants to partners with specialized expertise to support community-based recovery services.

### Financial Assistance for Households

In Florida, the Red Cross is providing financial assistance for severely impacted households in need of extra recovery assistance. We have reached out to thousands of households whose primary homes suffered major damage or were destroyed.

As of September 6, 2018, the Red Cross had already approved \$2,000 each to more than 3,000 households, and we continue to work with more residents every day. This assistance is helping individuals and families pay for temporary housing, make essential repairs to flood-damaged homes, replace lost appliances and furniture and much more. Below is a small sampling of the thousands of households receiving long-term recovery assistance; we are grateful to them for sharing their stories.

### Dennis Thompson, Big Pine Key, Florida

Dennis Thompson—a 62-year-old artist and former fisherman—had weathered many storms in the house built by his parents on Big Pine Key. The house was flooded by Irma, and it is now stripped to its frame, needing new walls, new floors...new everything. "The mold was pitch black and up to here", Dennis said, pointing to the wall at shoulder height.



Dennis Thompson, Big Pine Key, Florida. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross

Dennis was overcome with emotion when he recalled the Red Cross response. "It was just so fantastic to see everyone coming in from all over to help us," he said. "The best meal I have ever had was from the Red Cross." It was a meatball sub served by a volunteer who had driven an emergency response vehicle all the way from New York to help people in need.

Dennis received \$2,000 in financial assistance from the Red Cross, which will help him complete vital repairs to his home. The hard work ahead does not daunt him. "I'm the luckiest person in the world," he told us. He plans to give back after his experience with the Red Cross by donating blood more often to help others in need.

### The Arroliga Family, Glades County, Florida

Before Irma came, Francisco and Norma Arroliga lived with their son, Alberto, in a single-wide mobile home they purchased 20 years ago in LaBelle, Florida. Alberto and his brother helped his parents build their front porch and make many other improvements to the home.

After fleeing Irma's flooding that inundated most of LaBelle, the family was devastated when they returned. Their home's roof had collapsed in the kitchen; leaks were abundant, and the floor in Norma and Francisco's



bedroom was warped beyond recognition. The wall in the bathroom was split in half and there was mold everywhere “When [Norma] first saw the house after the storm, she cried,” Francisco said.

Months after the storm, the family still faced the daunting struggle to rebuild. They are thankful for the support they’ve received from the community and generous donors across the country. Volunteers from a local church group have begun removing insulation and re-roofing the home, and Francisco hopes to repay them for materials. The family received assistance from FEMA, and they’ve also received \$2,000 in financial assistance from the Red Cross, which they will use to help pay for the ongoing repairs.

Francisco has seen the aftermath of hurricanes from both sides now, and he wasn’t surprised that people from all over Florida and the U.S. have stepped up to help families like his. “When [Hurricane] Andrew hit, I went to Homestead to help,” he said. “Now, they’re coming here.”

### **Leslie Valant and Sharlene Skiver, Summerland Key, Florida**

Leslie, a native of the Florida Keys, lives with her husband and eight-year-old son in Summerland Key. Although they evacuated north as Irma approached, Leslie’s mother and father, Sharlene and Randy, stayed. They went to Leslie’s house after their own home lost power, and hid in a closet as the house seemed to come apart around them.

“I just remember that it was suddenly so bright in the closet,” Sharlene said. The entire back of the house, porch, roof and all, had been torn off by a tornado.

Leslie returned home a little less than a week later. As the family cleaned up with their neighbors, a Red Cross truck visited their neighborhood, offering chicken sandwiches. A hot meal after several days without power and water was a welcome sight.

Leslie’s father, who had been battling cancer, passed away soon after the hurricane. Through this extremely difficult time, Leslie and Sharlene were thankful that so many people came together to help. As the Valants worked over the last year to recover and rebuild their severely damaged home, Leslie applied for and received Red Cross financial recovery assistance, which they are using to pay for ongoing repairs.



The Arroliga Family, Glades County, Florida. Photo by Daniel Cima/  
American Red Cross.

### **Jacques and Susan Rippe, Volusia County, Florida**

Jacques Rippe lives with his wife Susan, who is legally blind, and daughter in Port Orange, Florida. When Irma barreled through their town, the couple was awakened in the middle of the night by terrifying noise.

“He had to pull me out of bed,” Susan recalled. “It was like a freight train came through the house, and the rain came down all night.” The morning light revealed severe damage: Their bedroom was now just four walls and a pile of rain-soaked belongings, while the back hallway was left with a door, but no roof.

Working closely with Kim-Anne, a Red Cross volunteer caseworker, the family has received \$2,000 of financial assistance. “I was amazed by the help we got from the Red Cross and FEMA,” Jacques said. “The Red Cross came through right away.”

Kim-Anne has stayed in touch with the family and is now coordinating a team to help replace and secure the tarps currently serving as the home’s roofs and walls. “She cares,” Jacques said. “She calls you just to talk through it.”



## Community Grants

The Red Cross also is working to support community-based recovery efforts through strategic grants to partner non-profit organizations with a strong track record of providing recovery services. Grants will support the following areas of need: home repair and rebuilding; behavioral health services across the affected counties, with a focus on the needs of children and youth; recovery-supporting services, such as Long-Term Recovery Committees, financial counseling and programs that assist people with disabilities, the elderly and underserved communities.

We are working to finalize grant agreements with a number of partners, and many have already been awarded, including grants to the SOS Foundation Community Kitchen in Monroe County, which feeds residents in need throughout the Florida Keys, and The Lott Carey Baptist Foreign Mission Society,

which will provide a variety of services, including mental health outreach, recovery assistance for underserved populations, mold mitigation and disaster preparedness training to help people affected by Hurricane Irma.

Founded in 2006, the SOS Foundation provides residents in the Florida Keys with healthy and consistent meals. In June, the Foundation was awarded a \$200,000 community grant from the Red Cross's Hurricane Irma recovery funds to purchase and distribute food, primarily locally sourced fresh produce and proteins, as well as dried beans and rice, for people still recovering from the effects of Hurricane Irma. According to a client survey, more than 85 percent of the people SOS Foundation serves were significantly impacted by Irma, including damaged homes and loss of income.



In just one day in June, the SOS Foundation's Community Kitchen staff and volunteers served 650 meals to children on Big Pine Key. SOS Foundation recently received a Red Cross community grant to support their Hurricane Irma recovery work. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross

## Volunteers Bring the Red Cross Mission to Life



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Without our dedicated disaster volunteers, the massive Red Cross response to help people affected by Hurricane Irma would not have been possible. Meet three of the more than **7,000 volunteers and employees** who delivered relief and comfort following Hurricane Irma.

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**Pamela** (left) has been with the Red Cross for thirteen years. After her career as a navy corpsman, she became a firefighter paramedic and volunteer with the Red Cross. Pamela supported back-to-back responses for Harvey, Irma and Maria. “I would like everybody who can to learn more about the Red Cross,” she said. “They help anybody and everybody they can in the community.”

**John** (center) has been with the Red Cross in Florida for three years. He responds to daily disasters like home fires and deploys for larger disasters like Irma. He drove an emergency response vehicle around Florida, doing

‘search and assist’ missions to seek out people in need. “It’s the warm fuzzy you get inside from helping,” he told us. “That’s why you do Red Cross.”

A veteran combat medic and registered nurse, **Kim-Anne** (right) began volunteering for the Red Cross just before Irma hit. Living in Nevada at the time of her deployment, Florida has captured her heart, and she recently moved to New Smyrna Beach with her 11-year-old daughter to continue supporting people recovering from Irma. “I’m all in for the Red Cross,” she said.

## Generous Donors Support Relief and Recovery for Irma Survivors

None of our response or recovery assistance would be possible without the extraordinary support of our donors. The Red Cross has raised \$97.0 million, including the value of critical donated goods and services, to help Hurricane Irma survivors. As of September 6, 2018, the Red Cross had already programmed approximately \$60.4 million on

emergency relief and recovery efforts for people affected by Hurricane Irma. The remaining funds will be used to help with unmet needs for individuals and families impacted by Hurricane Irma, as well as to expand longer-term community-based recovery services in the affected areas.





# You Helped People When It Was Needed Most

The extraordinary generosity of the public helped  
hundreds of thousands in need after Hurricane Irma.



**American Red Cross**

## Hurricane Irma Expenses and Commitments<sup>1</sup> (in millions): \$60.4M

As of September 6, 2018 (\$97.0M raised)

Expense Categories	Food, Shelter and Relief Items	Health and Emotional Support	Immediate Financial Assistance	Individual and Community Recovery	Total	Expense %
Financial assistance, food and other relief items	\$17.5	\$0.4	\$5.4	\$6.4	\$29.7	49.2%
Deployment and maintenance of volunteers and staff (includes airfare, lodging, meals and vehicles)	\$8.8	\$1.7	\$1.1	\$0.1	\$11.7	19.4%
Freight, postage and warehousing	\$5.0	0	0	0	\$5.0	8.3%
Long-term recovery disbursements on grants to help meet unmet needs	0	0	0	\$2.9	\$2.9	4.8%
Temporary disaster employees and long-term recovery hires	\$0.7	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.7	\$1.6	2.6%
IT, communications and call centers	\$0.8	\$0.1	\$0.2	\$0.1	\$1.2	2.0%
Kitchen, shelter and other logistics that enable service delivery	\$1.2	0	0	0	\$1.2	2.0%
Equipment, maintenance and fueling of Red Cross emergency vehicles and rented trucks	\$0.9	0	0	0	\$0.9	1.5%
Full-time Red Cross employees	\$0.5	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.8	1.3%
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$35.4</b>	<b>\$2.4</b>	<b>\$6.9</b>	<b>\$10.3</b>	<b>\$55.0</b>	<b>91.0%</b>
Management, general and fundraising <sup>2</sup>					\$5.4	9.0%
<b>Total Expenses</b>					<b>\$60.4</b>	<b>100%</b>
Program Dollars Remaining <sup>3</sup>					\$33.3	
Management, general and fundraising remaining to be applied					\$3.3	
<b>Total Budget</b>					<b>\$97.0</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Because the Hurricane Irma response in the U.S. Virgin Islands was already underway when they were impacted by Hurricane Maria, the costs for the response to both storms in the U.S. Virgin Islands are included in the Hurricane Irma budget.

<sup>2</sup> 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 our more than 20,000 employees and approximately 300,000 volunteers, fundraising and communications functions, and other support services across all program lines. 91 cents of every dollar received for Hurricane Irma will be spent on our services to people affected by Hurricane Irma.

<sup>3</sup> Additional dollars remaining to be disbursed on grants that are already signed: \$6.9M.

*Thank you!*

The Red Cross must be ready for every disaster, big or small, and we respond to an average of nearly 64,000 disasters per 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 because they know they can depend on us right after the disaster and through their recovery. Your donation helps us fulfill this promise. We are grateful for your trust.





To learn more about Red Cross response and recovery efforts to help Hurricane Irma survivors, visit [redcross.org/irma](https://redcross.org/irma).



**American  
Red Cross**

#### **Mission**

The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.