



**American
Red Cross**

Hurricane Irma: Two-Year Update

September 2019



After Irma came ashore, more than 7,000 American Red Cross disaster workers from across the U.S.—over 90 percent volunteers—mounted a massive response effort to provide shelter, food, relief supplies, financial assistance and comfort.



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



More than **1.8 million** relief items distributed



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



More than **62,500 health and mental health contacts** made

In the first days and weeks after Hurricane Irma, the Red Cross provided vital services to help survivors get back on their feet. We have remained throughout the long recovery process to help people put their lives back together.



Over **9,200** damaged or destroyed households provided with **recovery financial assistance** totaling over **\$37 million**



Awarded grants totaling over **\$15 million** to provide longer-term recovery in the most impacted communities

All numbers are cumulative and reflect Red Cross response and recovery efforts since September 6, 2017.

Cover: Virginia Rosales and Pedro Perez share their story with a Red Cross volunteer in Immokalee, Florida. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross.
Above: Red Cross volunteer Dennis hands a hot meal for lunch to Jack in Key West, where power and potable water were scarce resources after Hurricane Irma hit the Florida Keys. Photo by Marko Kovic/The American Red Cross.

A Message from Harvey Johnson, President, Humanitarian Services, American Red Cross



Hurricane Irma made landfall in September 2017 as one of the most powerful Atlantic hurricanes on record, carving a trail of destruction through the U.S. Virgin Islands, up the entire length of Florida and into nearly each of our Southeastern states. Occurring just weeks after Hurricane Harvey's devastating impact, thousands more people were uprooted from their homes and lives in the face of massive devastation.

Likewise, thousands more American Red Cross volunteers stepped up to meet this overwhelming need, bringing aid and comfort, and providing shelter, food, relief supplies and emotional support. Generous donations from the public made it possible for the Red Cross to respond in the darkest hours, and to remain long after immediate needs were met. Two years later, we continue to stand with Irma survivors in the Keys and across southern Florida as they rebuild their lives.

Many people experienced unimaginable losses in the storm's wake. Yet each individual or family has a unique story about how their lives changed forever—and helped them to create a path forward. Through it all, the Red Cross has been by their sides, delivering ongoing support tailored to their needs. We have provided more than \$37 million in financial assistance for thousands of individuals and families whose homes experienced major damage or were destroyed by the hurricane.

We have also awarded over \$15 million in grants to partner organizations that are providing much needed family and community assistance, and we are supporting long-term recovery committees to identify and help residents gain access to federal, state and other forms of assistance that will meet their unmet needs.

Disasters can strike in a matter of moments, but the road to recovery is often long and challenging. The last two years have been difficult for many Irma survivors. With the help of compassionate supporters and caring volunteers, the Red Cross is there every step of the way. On behalf of those we serve, we thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harvey Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Harvey Johnson

Bringing Relief and Refuge to Impacted Communities

Bringing powerful winds and floodwaters, Hurricane Irma ravaged the Caribbean—including the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico—then created widespread damage across Florida and beyond. With the invaluable support and generosity of donors, thousands of dedicated Red Cross volunteers and employees quickly sprang into action to make the first few days and weeks more bearable.

We quickly mobilized our fleet of emergency response vehicles, relief supplies and equipment to offer refuge from the storm. In collaboration with our government and community partners, the Red Cross sheltered tens of thousands of people who needed a safe place to stay. Through the intensity of the hurricane and the enormous cleanup effort, we provided food, relief supplies, health services and a caring presence.

In a crowded shelter, basic comforts like meals and snacks can mean the world to those wondering what

will become of the homes they left behind. For many families who evacuated during Irma's approach or fled rising waters, there was no chance to pack essentials like toothpaste, soap, diapers, hygiene items and shampoo. The Red Cross provided comfort kits with basic personal supplies for these everyday necessities.

Providing Support and Help in the Path of Destruction

While food, shelter and relief items are the most visible and tangible types of support we provide, emotional support and a sympathetic ear may have an even greater impact for people coping with the trauma of disaster. In Irma's aftermath, trained Red Cross mental health workers were on hand to provide comfort and to 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.



Red Cross Volunteer Robert receives a hug from Sabrina, a resident from Naples, Florida. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross.

When affected neighborhoods were safe to visit, Red Cross volunteers in our emergency response vehicles delivered hot meals, cold water, ice and more—meeting an urgent need for residents who went days and even weeks without power. We also distributed supplies like rakes, shovels and buckets, as well as bug spray and coolers for people working to clean up damaged homes. In the wake of a disaster, the sight of a Red Cross volunteer or vehicle can provide much needed hope to those putting the pieces back together.

Immediate Financial Assistance for Urgent Needs

For many people impacted by Irma, getting back on their feet meant more than cleanup supplies or a hot meal. Some survivors needed support with utilities, groceries, clothing, medical supplies and other bills. The Red Cross provided immediate financial assistance for severely impacted residents, quickly getting funds to those who needed it in the weeks after Irma. This support helped people access basic needs in the hurricane's wake.



Florida Keys resident Tricia talks to Red Cross disaster relief worker Lynette about hurricane damage to her home. Photo by Marko Kopic/American Red Cross

Two Years Later: Red Cross Continues to Support Survivors and Communities

Hurricane Irma's high winds and storm surge destroyed or damaged thousands of homes.

As survivors left shelters, they all faced the task of rebuilding their lives—some have only recently been able to return to their own homes, while others have had to relocate entirely. Two years later, the Red Cross continues working with government and non-profit partners, community and faith-based organizations, and Long-Term Recovery Committees to support recovery for affected residents.

“The Red Cross is not just helping people recover—you help them embrace life again.”

Deborah Quinn, Cape Canaveral, Florida

For survivors like Deborah Quinn, who lived in the Florida Keys at the time of the hurricane, this extra help made all the difference. With support from the Red Cross, she was able to cover medical expenses and to move to Cape Canaveral, where she had access to a team of doctors who could treat her ongoing battle with cancer. [Without the Red Cross], I wouldn't have been able to move and get the medical care I needed,” Deborah said. “I'm so grateful!”

Financial Assistance for Households

Over the past year, the Red Cross has continued to provide financial assistance for impacted households in need of long-term recovery support in Florida. We reached out to thousands of FEMA-registered households whose primary homes were confirmed as suffering major damage or were destroyed. In addition, we continue to work with other households not registered by FEMA who have applied for Red Cross financial assistance through local disaster case management agencies.

As of August 26, 2019, the Red Cross has provided \$2,000 each to more than 9,200 households. Nearly half of these households had more complex needs, and the Red Cross provided them with an additional \$4,500. With this support, survivors tell us they have been able to pay for temporary housing, make essential repairs to wind-and-flood-damaged homes, replace lost appliances and furniture and much more.

Frank Wagner, Port St. Lucie, Florida

Frank's home in Port. St. Lucie—a town nestled on the Atlantic Coast of Southern Florida—was damaged extensively during Hurricane Irma. The storm ripped off nearly an entire layer of the roof and left it in his neighbor's yard. The home had major, persistent leaks that continued to cause damage inside the house.

“We were living in a deteriorating situation,” Frank said.

With assistance from the Red Cross, Frank bought building supplies like sheetrock and paint to repair the home and make it livable again. He said the help could not have come at a better time and helped him recover not only physically, but also emotionally.

“We were overjoyed,” he said. “We felt it was an answer to prayers...it helped us tremendously!”

Working with the Red Cross was a new experience for Frank, but one he will never forget. He is extremely grateful to Red Cross volunteers and donors.

“A very little bit can go a long way to keep you going,” he said.



Frank Wagner talks to a Red Cross volunteer in his Port St. Lucie home. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross

Pedro Perez and Virginia Rosales, Immokalee, Florida

“We had hurricanes come through here before,” said, Virginia Rosales, “which were nothing compared to Hurricane Irma. I was scared.”

Virginia and her husband, Pedro Perez, spent the storm in their home with extended family. No one was expecting Irma to be so powerful. Their home sustained extensive damage to the roof, leading to leaks inside the home, as well as mold. For a time, they lived with a tarp covering part of the damage, but water still seeped in.

Pedro works in construction, and with all his job sites shut down following the storm; estimates for a new roof were more than they could manage. In addition, the couple’s adult nephews had moved in after the storm destroyed their mobile home. With seven people in the home, they desperately needed to make repairs.

“It was bad,” said Pedro. “I thought, ‘If we can just get help with the roof, we can fix the rest over time.’” With assistance from the Red Cross, the family was able to do just that.

“I love the roof, and I am so grateful,” Pedro said. “It’s hard to get through, and every little [bit] that you get, it’s appreciated.” Virginia added, “Knowing that there are volunteers, it’s very heartwarming—people doing good for other people. We’re very grateful.”

Debbie Coe, Immokalee, Florida

As Hurricane Irma approached, Debbie Coe made the difficult decision to leave her home with her adopted son, Casey, due to safety concerns. When they returned after the storm, they found their house in shambles. The entire back of the home was nearly gone, and “water was everywhere—it just...melted the walls,” Debbie recalled.

With nowhere else to go, Debbie and Casey stayed in “a crumbling house.” When Debbie learned that a Red Cross partner wanted to build her a new home, she was overwhelmed with emotion.

In April 2019—nearly two years after Hurricane Irma hit —Debbie and Casey came home again, thanks to collaborations between several organizations. Financial assistance from the Red Cross helped Debbie cover many needs for their new house.



Debbie Coe and her adopted son, Casey, in their new home. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross

“You couldn’t do anything any better with your money to help those that need, the way we did,” she said. “We are very grateful.”

Juana Malagon and Isabel DeLaRosa, Immokalee, Florida

At the time Irma struck, Juana Malagon and Isabel DeLaRosa shared their home with Juana’s daughter and her three children. They traveled to Tennessee to wait out the storm and returned less than a week later. They were horrified by what they found.

Everything downstairs was gone; the roof was damaged; windows were broken. They used a generator for air, with four adults and three children all living in what remained of the house. It was a month before they had electricity again. Every time it rained, water flowed in through a hole in the roof.

A Red Cross grantee helped the family make repairs after nearly two years of living under the leaky roof. In addition, the Red Cross provided financial assistance to Juana and Isabel.

“I didn’t even know about that help,” Juana said of the support services. “Thank God [they] found me...we would never have been able to do it [on our own].”

Grants for Community-Based Recovery Services

The Red Cross has awarded more than \$15 million to support community-based recovery services across Florida. These grants are being used to help fund partners with specialized expertise, such as repair and rebuild assistance for impacted families; social service programs; and outreach to underserved communities; as well as to support long-term recovery groups statewide.

We have awarded 20 grants to help with repair and reconstruction of damaged or destroyed homes, along with other housing needs. For example, a Red Cross grant to Rural Neighborhoods, a Florida-based non-profit focused on providing livable spaces for working families, helped fund their repair and rebuilding efforts in hard-hit Immokalee, Florida.

We are also helping partners provide vital social services, including grants for mental health counseling for Irma survivors through grantee Catholic Charities, financial counseling and advocacy by Operation Hope, and legal support through Brevard Legal Aid.

These powerful partnerships are bringing hope to residents like Andres Galán, whose home was severely damaged by Irma. He now looks forward to sharing his rebuilt home with his son and grandchildren. "I'm very grateful for what [Rural Neighborhoods and the Red Cross have] done for us," he said. "And not just us, but all the people they have helped."

Supporting Recovery in the U.S. Virgin Islands

Hurricanes Irma and Maria struck the U.S. Virgin Islands with devastating force, battering the islands twice over a 10-day period. Hundreds of Red Crossers from all over the nation joined with local volunteers—many of whom had lost their own homes—to provide vital assistance for impacted communities.

Today, the Red Cross continues to provide disaster preparedness and recovery assistance to the U.S. Virgin Islands. We have established preparedness programs for children in grades K through 12, making presentations and supplying a starter emergency kit to over 3,800 students to date.

The Red Cross also implemented a grant program for seniors and disabled citizens to assist with unmet needs, as well as another grant program to help hurricane-impacted farmers that has now been extended for another two years.



Andres Galán in the home that Rural Neighborhoods is building for him in Immokalee, Florida. Rural Neighborhoods received a Red Cross community grant to support their Hurricane Irma recovery work. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross.

Leslie Todman, a St. Thomas farmer, has used this Red Cross assistance for a variety of needs. "The Red Cross was the only program that actually put money in our hands to help all the farmers," he said. "We are very grateful for the help."

Compassionate Donors Fund Hurricane Irma Relief and Recovery

Compassionate donors fuel our relief and recovery efforts. The Red Cross has raised \$97.1 million, including the value of donated goods and services, to help Hurricane Irma survivors. (This does not include dollars supporting the Hurricane Irma response from our general Hurricanes of 2017 fund.) As of August 26, 2019, the Red Cross had programmed approximately \$108.9 million on emergency relief and recovery efforts for people affected by Hurricane Irma.

Today, the Red Cross continues to help with unmet needs for those impacted by Hurricane Irma and support community-based recovery services in the affected areas. As of August 26, 2019, we estimate total expenses of approximately \$115 million for our Hurricane Irma response, including allocations from the Hurricanes of 2017 fund. This estimate could change, based on remaining community needs and partner services for Hurricane Irma, as well as the other hurricanes of 2017.

Your Help Made a Real Difference

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



Hurricane Irma Expenses and Commitments (in millions)¹

As of August 26, 2019 (\$97.1M 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	\$39.2	\$62.5	57%
Deployment of volunteers and staff (includes airfare, lodging, meals and vehicles)	\$8.8	\$1.7	\$1.1	\$0.3	\$11.9	11%
Long-term recovery disbursements on grants to help meet unmet needs ²	—	—	—	\$11.5	\$11.5	11%
Freight, postage and warehousing	\$5.0	—	—	\$0.5	\$5.5	5%
Temporary disaster hires	\$0.7	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$2.3	\$3.2	3%
Kitchen, shelter and other logistics that enable service delivery	\$1.3	—	—	\$0.2	\$1.5	1%
IT, communications and call centers	\$0.8	\$0.1	\$0.2	\$0.2	\$1.3	1%
Equipment, maintenance and fueling of Red Cross emergency vehicles and rented trucks	\$0.9	—	—	—	\$0.9	1%
Full-time Red Cross employees	\$0.5	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.8	1%
Total Program Expenses	\$35.5	\$2.4	\$6.9	\$54.3	\$99.1	91%
Management, general and fundraising ³					\$9.8	9%
Total Expenses⁴					\$108.9	100%

¹Because 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.

²\$3.9 million remaining to be disbursed on grants that are already signed. Does not include partner organizations' administrative costs related to the grant, which are approximately 1-3 percent of the awarded amount. These costs are reflected in the management, general and fundraising rows.

³Management, 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 services to people affected by Hurricane Irma.

⁴As of August 26, 2019, we estimate total expenses of approximately \$115 million for our Hurricane Irma response, including allocations from the Hurricanes of 2017 fund. This estimate could change, based on remaining community needs and partner services for Hurricane Irma, as well as the other hurricanes of 2017.



Thank you!

The Red Cross must be ready for every disaster, big or small, and we respond to an average of more than 62,000 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.



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