

The American Red Cross stands by its response and recovery efforts in Louisiana. We are proud of our thousands of volunteers – from Louisiana, and from across the country – and we are grateful for the collaborative relationship we share with the State of Louisiana and the affected parishes.

In early August, Louisiana experienced a historic, no-notice flooding event where the resulting damage and destruction prompted the largest American Red Cross relief effort since Superstorm Sandy in 2012. For more than six weeks, 4,700 Red Cross workers, the majority of whom are volunteers, responded from each of our 50 states. They and our partners worked tirelessly to provide relief services to those impacted by this disaster. As of September 30, we have served 1.3 million meals and snacks, distributed almost 700,000 relief items, and provided 81,000 overnight stays in shelters—more overnight stays than we provided during Superstorm Sandy.

The Red Cross responded quickly, even as the rainwaters were still falling. From those initial moments, the Red Cross has been committed to alleviating the pain and suffering of those in Louisiana—and we are still on the ground, helping people in the hardest-hit areas to recover. From the very outset, the Red Cross responded in partnership with the Department of Child and Family Services (DCFS), the Governor's Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness (GOHSEP), and the Parish Offices of Emergency Preparedness (OEPs). By 5:00 p.m. on Friday, August 12, the Louisiana Red Cross Region had opened 12 shelters; by the evening of Saturday, August 13, the Red Cross was operating 29 shelters and supporting two others; and by Sunday, August 14, the Red Cross had 46 shelters open. As the number of shelters grew, so did the shelter populations – peaking at 10,510 people on the night of Sunday, August 14 – and all were served by a collaborative team of Red Cross volunteers, DCFS staff members and our partners.

As the response in Louisiana stabilized, the Red Cross joined with the State of Louisiana and parish officials to focus on the management of shelters and the provision of services to their residents. The Red Cross supported the consolidation of the Celtic Studio shelter and the River Center Shelter. We collaborated with DCFS and multiple state agencies to develop the Baton Rouge River Center 2016 Louisiana Floods Shelter Transition Plan. That plan brought needed clarity to our respective roles and responsibilities, and established expectations for service delivery. More importantly, the plan resulted in better service to its thousands of residents and uplifted their experience: hot breakfasts, community engagement (e.g., children met NASA astronauts, were visited by Disney Princesses and were entertained by NBA stars with the New Orleans Pelicans). The successes in crafting this plan and management by the cross-functional team will provide a template for similar shelter transitions in all future disasters.

Our work in Louisiana continues. As we transition from a response phase to a recovery phase, we are working closely every day with federal, state and local agencies to develop tailored transitional housing plans for each of the remaining residents in the last of the shelters. We continue to provide financial assistance to all of those who qualify,

and are committed to continuing to meet many of the recovery needs of those most severely affected by this disaster.

Given the size, scope and complexity of this disaster, it is not surprising that the Red Cross and our partners would be confronted by a range of challenges. This circumstance isn't unique to Louisiana or to the Red Cross: it is the very nature of disasters. After all, one definition of a disaster is where needs outweigh the local resources available to respond. Most people will recognize that sheltering, feeding, providing security, and tending to the mental health and health needs of 10,510 shelter residents is no easy task. Thus, admitting to challenges is acknowledging reality (not failure), and pragmatically inviting collaboration in crafting solutions. Together, the Red Cross and our government and non-government partners took on many challenges and crafted workable solutions that have proven beneficial to those impacted by this disaster.

Notably, the Red Cross provided all of these services at zero cost to the State of Louisiana. Our massive relief operation in Louisiana is anticipated to cost \$25 – \$30 million. This cost range represents our best estimate at this time and may change upwards or downwards as the situation continues to evolve. This estimate includes the costs of providing food, shelter, blankets, cots, emotional support, health services and relief supplies. It also includes some of the costs that make relief possible, including logistics, staff and technology expenses to support such a significant disaster. An average of 91 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs, including disaster relief and recovery. As of September 29, the Red Cross has received approximately \$25 million in designated donations and pledges to support Louisiana, and the Red Cross continues to honor donor intent. Any designated funds we raise beyond what are needed for emergency relief will be put to use serving the recovery and disaster preparedness needs of the affected communities in Louisiana.

The Red Cross, as a donor-funded, volunteer relief organization, remains committed and ready to always seek the best outcomes for the communities we proudly live in and serve.