



**American
Red Cross**

Midwest Tornadoes and Floods

ONE-YEAR UPDATE | MAY 2020

Delivering Relief Across the Midwest Amid Relentless Disasters

Through the first six months of 2019, a series of extraordinary floods and severe weather events—including devastating tornado outbreaks—battered communities across the Midwest. Responding to nearly one disaster every week over this period, the American Red Cross was there with vital aid for tens of thousands of residents impacted by these emergencies, providing refuge, food, relief supplies, financial assistance and more for people in their darkest hours.

In March, severe weather and destructive flooding fed by torrential rains and winter snowmelt impacted multiple states—including Nebraska, Iowa, Michigan and Illinois—forcing thousands of residents to flee the swiftly rising waters. Recurring floods continued to test the endurance of survivors and disaster workers throughout the spring.

In late April through May, hundreds of tornadoes struck communities in Arkansas, Indiana, Missouri, Nebraska

and other states across the region—including a devastating outbreak that tore through Dayton, Ohio, and surrounding areas, damaging and destroying homes. Meanwhile, swollen rivers from the Great Plains to the Mississippi Valley continued to inundate homes and neighborhoods, compounding the spring's heartbreaking losses.

Time and again, Red Cross volunteers and employees stepped up across the twelve affected states with relief and comfort for the impacted communities. They helped open shelters for individuals and families who were forced from their homes, delivered warm meals and snacks to ravaged neighborhoods and distributed vital relief and cleanup supplies. They also offered sorely needed individual care like basic health services and emotional support for weary survivors—as well as providing additional assistance for people with disabilities and functional needs.

Response at a Glance



More than **308,200 meals and snacks** served with partners



Nearly **130,300 relief items** distributed



Nearly **15,000 overnight shelter stays** provided with partners



More than **17,000 individual care contacts** made for health, mental health, spiritual care, and support for people with disabilities and functional needs

—Cumulative figures in Ark., Iowa, Ill., Ind., Kan., Mo., Mich., Minn., N.D., Neb., Ohio and Wis. as of March 13, 2020.

Supporting Recovery in Tornado- and Flood-Ravaged Communities

With our community, government and non-profit partners, the Red Cross has continued to stand by survivors of these devastating tornadoes and floods with ongoing support as they begin to recover and rebuild their lives. Red Cross workers have helped families make plans for recovery and offered guidance through the sometimes bewildering process, as well as connecting affected residents with additional recovery resources available from our partners and other organizations.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, the Red Cross has provided financial assistance totaling approximately \$4.7 million as of March 13, 2020. These funds have

helped survivors meet their most urgent needs, including buying groceries, paying bills and finding a place to stay, and have also provided support for longer-term recovery—such as help with disaster-caused expenses like home repairs for households that suffered severe damage.

We've also collaborated with and supported Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRG) in some of the hardest-hit areas. These groups bring together disaster relief partners and stakeholders from the local community to identify and help provide for the unmet needs of affected families and communities.

Red Cross Assistance Makes a Difference for Survivors

Over the past year, the Red Cross has continued to provide financial assistance, emotional support and more as individuals and families across the Midwest recover from the devastating 2019 tornadoes and floods.

Gary Myers, King Lake, Nebraska

Gary Myers, a long-time resident of King Lake, Nebraska, had experienced flooding before—but nothing like he saw last spring. When rising waters began coming into the back of the house, Gary, who was home with his brother, knew that it was time to get out.

“When I stepped out of my house, the water was up above my waist,” he said. “There was a helicopter flying above, and I started waving at it.” Directed by the helicopter, an airboat came to pick them up. The harrowing journey ended in a Red Cross shelter in Elkhorn, Nebraska. “We stayed in that shelter for 5–7 days, and they made things as normal as it could be,” Gary said. “They were good caretakers.”

When Gary returned home, he found nearly every surface covered in mud—water had risen to about 18 inches inside. The carpet and floors had to be removed, along with all the drywall—floor to ceiling—and doors, leaving a skeleton of the house.

Gary received immediate financial assistance from the Red Cross for urgent needs, as well other relief supplies like cleanup items. With Gary now back in his home after making extensive repairs, the Red Cross is providing a

second round of financial assistance to provide continued support for his recovery needs.

“The volunteers—all of those who helped—it was great; just wonderful,” he said.



King Lake, Nebraska, resident Gary Myers, with his sister, Ladonna, discusses his recovery from the February 2019 floods with a Red Cross worker. Photo by American Red Cross

Kristin Leighliter, Dayton, Ohio

Kristin Leighliter was in bed last May, streaming a TV show as her children slept, when she noticed that the evening's stormy weather was getting noticeably rougher. She turned on a local station just in time to learn that a powerful tornado was bearing down on her neighborhood.

Moving quickly, she woke up the children, and all three hunkered down in the bathtub. Just a couple of minutes later, the tornado arrived. “It was like a train coming

through the house,” she said. “I heard things falling all around, then total silence.”

Her house was severely damaged by the storm—fallen trees left holes in the roof; windows and light fixtures were shattered just by the pressure of the tornado, and the bedroom door had been pulled out of its frame. When the family crawled out the front door with help from the fire department, Kristin saw that a tree had fallen on her car as well. With her home unlivable, she had to move her family to a hotel for four months.

Thanks to generous support from the public, the Red Cross could help Kristin and her family. Disaster workers provided comfort kits and emotional support, along with immediate financial assistance to purchase food and clothing. Later, another round of financial assistance helped her pay for ongoing expenses to get her family back into their home. It was Kristin's second experience with the Red Cross, which also aided her family after a home fire in 2012.

“I love the Red Cross,” she said. “Being somebody that has been fortunate enough for them to come in and help me twice, your money is being used for a purpose. It's definitely going to people in need.”



Kristin Leightner, of Dayton, Ohio, received Red Cross support from the Red Cross, including financial assistance, after her home was severely damaged by a May 2019 tornado. Photo by American Red Cross

Compassionate Donors Power Red Cross Relief and Recovery Efforts

Thanks to our compassionate supporters, the Red Cross raised \$12.4 million, including the value of critical donated goods and services, to help people impacted by the 2019 tornadoes and flooding in the Midwest. As of March 13, 2020, the Red Cross had

spent approximately \$12.3 million on relief and recovery efforts for affected residents across 12 states. We will continue working with our partners to support both individual and community recovery in the impacted communities.



Red Cross Volunteer Bob Farr assesses damage following a tornado in the Northridge neighborhood of Dayton, Ohio. Photo by Dawn Newman/American Red Cross.

Midwest Tornadoes and Floods 2019 Expenses and Commitments (in millions)¹
as of March 13, 2020 (\$12.4 million raised)

Expense Categories	Food, Shelter and Relief Items	Health and Emotional Support	Financial Assistance	Total	Expense %
Financial assistance, food and other relief items	\$1.9	\$0.1	\$4.7	\$6.7	54%
Deployment of volunteers and staff (includes airfare, lodging, meals and vehicles)	\$2.4	\$0.3	\$0.1	\$2.8	23%
Full-time Red Cross employees	\$0.7	—	\$0.1	\$0.8	6%
Freight, postage and warehousing	\$0.3	—	—	\$0.3	2%
Equipment, maintenance and fueling of Red Cross emergency vehicles and rented trucks	\$0.2	—	—	\$0.2	2%
Kitchen, shelter and other logistics that enable service delivery	\$0.2	—	—	\$0.2	2%
IT, communications and call centers	\$0.2	—	—	\$0.2	2%
Total Program Expenses	\$5.9	\$0.4	\$4.9	\$11.2	91%
Management, general and fundraising ²				\$1.1	9%
Total Expenses				\$12.3	100%
Program dollars remaining to be spent				\$0.1	
Management, general and fundraising remaining to be applied				—	
Total Budget				\$12.4	

¹Dollar figures in all tables are rounded to the nearest \$100,000; therefore, expenses \$49,999 and below are represented as zero.

²Management, 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 the flooding and tornadoes in the Midwest will be spent on our services to affected residents.

Thank you!

The Red Cross must be ready for every disaster, big or small, and we respond to an average of more than 60,000 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.