



## Western Wildfires

ONE-MONTH UPDATE | DECEMBER 2020



### Red Cross Aids Thousands Evacuated Amid Devastating Wildfires

When the Beachie Creek Fire roared through northwestern Oregon this September, Michael Chauran and his wife had little time to evacuate their home in Mehama. At their son's warning, they quickly grabbed their cash, silver and a few other items and fled the fast-approaching flames. While the couple evacuated quickly, Michael expected their home would survive.

The couple was unharmed, but their house was not. It burned to the ground.

In the aftermath, Michael came to a Red Cross relief distribution site, where he picked up a cleanup kit to help with the physically and emotionally draining process of sifting through the ashes of his home.

Michael and his family are among the hundreds of thousands of people across the western U.S. who have turned to the Red Cross for assistance in the wake of record-setting wildfires. From Montana to Southern California, massive blazes have scorched millions of acres this year, forcing impacted residents across the West to seek safe refuge from the flames. In response, trained Red Cross disaster teams have worked around the clock to deliver care and comfort in people's darkest hours.

In Oregon, huge wildfires caused unprecedented damage. In just three days this year, wildfires burned more than 900,000 acres—nearly twice the amount

that burns on average in an entire year. What's more, at least five towns were reported as substantially destroyed.

Similarly, an entire town in Washington was practically wiped off the map as fires cropped up throughout the state. Flames consumed 80% of Malden in eastern Washington, incinerating the post office, the library and other community buildings—as well as most of its homes.

In California, residents have already suffered through the state's most destructive wildfire season on record, and it's not over yet. More than 4 million acres have burned—doubling the state's annual average. The August Complex Fire in the northern end of the state has charred more than a million acres across several counties, making it the first "gigafire" in modern history. And in California's wine country, the Glass Fire destroyed hundreds of homes and forced tens of thousands of residents to evacuate.

These powerful blazes have created a tremendous need for shelter, food, water, cleanup supplies and emotional support, which the Red Cross has been able to meet thanks to the compassionate commitment of our donors. Powered by your generosity, we will continue to support survivors of these western wildfires in the weeks and months to come.

### Providing Comfort and Care for Wildfire Survivors

To meet the dire needs of the thousands of people who've been forced to flee their homes to escape these dangerous wildfires, Red Cross disaster teams have worked tirelessly to offer help and hope amid the challenges of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Thousands of trained Red Cross volunteers and employees have worked alongside our partners to offer safe shelter for individuals and families displaced by the flames. To ensure the health and safety of our volunteers and those we serve during this unprecedented time, we've sheltered impacted residents in hotels when possible, implemented social distancing protocols and health screenings, and distributed masks and hand sanitizer.

Along with safe refuge for wildfire evacuees, we've provided thousands of nourishing meals, critical relief supplies and individual care, which includes health care and sorely needed emotional support. In addition, we've helped reunite families who lost contact in the chaos of the wildfires.

To make it easier for impacted residents to access our services, we set up distribution sites, where individuals and families can come to collect food, water, cleanup supplies like rakes, buckets and ash sifters, and other essentials.



At a Red Cross shelter for wildfire evacuees in Aptos, California, volunteer Jillian Robertson speaks with Jeovaugh as he helps his daughter, Esmae, complete her virtual schoolwork. Photo by Dennis Drenner/American Red Cross

In the wake of emergencies, even basic needs can stretch the resources of many survivors. Before they can begin the arduous process of re-building, many impacted individuals and families need immediate financial assistance to get back on their feet. To help with urgent needs, the Red Cross is providing funds to help people who were hit hardest by the wildfires. With this financial assistance, families can put food on their tables, pay for transportation expenses, make a security deposit on an apartment and more.

### Response at a Glance

Thousands of Red Cross workers have mounted a massive response to help people impacted by the unrelenting wildfires in the West.



More than **901,900 meals and snacks** served with partners



More than **381,200 overnight stays in emergency lodgings** provided with partners



More than **57,000 individual care contacts** made



More than **56,500 relief items** distributed

## 'Having the Red Cross there just made things so much better'

In late August, Bill Corbin got word that the SCU Lightning Complex Fire was threatening his family's home in Morgan Hills, California. This huge wildfire — which was finally contained in early October — was the third largest in California history (surpassed only by 2018's Mendocino Complex Fire and the 2020 August Complex Fire) and destroyed more than 220 homes and businesses. A few days after the Corbins evacuated, Bill thought the worst was over, and the family returned home. But as the fires continued to spread, they soon had to evacuate again.

The family went to an evacuation center at Sobrato High School, where the Red Cross was helping evacuees find

safe shelter. Our disaster workers helped the family get a hotel room, where a volunteer checked them in and made sure they had everything they needed, including food and snacks to take to their room.

The evacuation, coupled with the fear of losing their home "was stressful for all of us," Bill said. "Having the Red Cross there just made things so much better."

Fortunately, the flames spared the Corbin family's home. A week after they returned, a Red Cross nurse called to check in and see if they needed anything. "It was just a very caring conversation," said Bill. "I was amazed that I was getting the call, to be honest with you."



The Corbin family had to evacuate twice as the SCU Lightning Complex Fire threatened their home in Morgan Hills, California. Photo courtesy of the Corbin family.

*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.

## Western Wildfires Relief and Recovery: Estimated Budgets

Thanks to our generous donors, the Red Cross has raised \$12.1 million for the California Wildfires, \$7.3 million for the Oregon Wildfires, \$1.7 million for the Washington Wildfires, and \$17.8 million for the Western Wildfires — including the value of critical donated goods and services — to help people impacted by these devastating disasters.

California Wildfires Estimated Budget <sup>1,2</sup> (in millions)						
as of October 31, 2020						
Expense Categories	Food, Shelter and Relief Items	Health and Emotional Support	Financial Assistance	Community Recovery	Total	Expense %
Financial assistance, food and other relief items	\$9.6	\$0.1	\$1.6	—	\$11.3	62%
Deployment of volunteers and staff (includes airfare, lodging, meals and vehicles)	\$2.7	\$0.3	—	—	\$3.0	17%
Full-time Red Cross employees	\$0.6	—	\$0.1	—	\$0.7	4%
Kitchen, shelter and other logistics that enable service delivery	\$0.5	—	—	—	\$0.5	3%
Freight, postage and warehousing	\$0.5	—	—	—	\$0.5	3%
IT, communications and call centers	\$0.1	—	—	—	\$0.1	1%
Equipment, maintenance and fueling of Red Cross emergency vehicles and rented trucks	\$0.1	—	—	—	\$0.1	1%
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$14.1</b>	<b>\$0.4</b>	<b>\$1.7</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>\$16.2</b>	<b>91%</b>
Management, general and fundraising <sup>3</sup>					\$1.8	10%
<b>Total Estimated Budget</b>					<b>\$18.0</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>1</sup>Figures are budget estimates and could change as needs change.

<sup>2</sup>Dollar figures in all tables are rounded to the nearest \$100K; therefore, expenses \$49,999 and below are represented as zero.

<sup>3</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 approximately 19,000 employees and more than 300,000 volunteers, fundraising and communications functions, and other support services across all program lines. 90 cents of every dollar received for the western wildfires will be spent on our services to help people affected by the western wildfires.

**Oregon Wildfires Estimated Budget<sup>1,2</sup> (in millions)**

as of October 31, 2020

Expense Categories	Food, Shelter and Relief Items	Health and Emotional Support	Financial Assistance	Community Recovery	Total	Expense %
Financial assistance, food and other relief items	\$12.4	\$0.3	\$1.8	—	\$14.5	61%
Deployment of volunteers and staff (includes airfare, lodging, meals and vehicles)	\$2.5	\$1.4	—	—	\$3.9	16%
Freight, postage and warehousing	\$1.5	—	—	—	\$1.5	6%
Kitchen, shelter and other logistics that enable service delivery	\$0.8	—	—	—	\$0.8	3%
Full-time Red Cross employees	\$0.6	\$0.1	\$0.1	—	\$0.8	3%
IT, communications and call centers	\$0.2	—	—	—	\$0.2	1%
Equipment, maintenance and fueling of Red Cross emergency vehicles and rented trucks	\$0.1	—	—	—	\$0.1	0%
<b>Total Program Expenses<sup>3</sup></b>	<b>\$18.1</b>	<b>\$1.8</b>	<b>\$1.9</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>\$21.8</b>	<b>90%</b>
Management, general and fundraising <sup>4</sup>					\$2.4	10%
<b>Total Estimated Budget</b>					<b>\$24.2</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>1</sup>Figures are budget estimates and could change as needs change.

<sup>2</sup>Dollar figures in all tables are rounded to the nearest \$100K; therefore, expenses \$49,999 and below are represented as zero.

<sup>3</sup>As of October 31, 2020, we estimate total expenses of approximately \$24.2M for our Oregon Wildfires response, including specific expenses expected to be reimbursed by the State of Oregon. This estimate could change based on remaining community needs and partner services for Oregon Wildfires, as well as other Western Wildfires.

<sup>4</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 approximately 19,000 employees and more than 300,000 volunteers, fundraising and communications functions, and other support services across all program lines. 90 cents of every dollar received for the western wildfires will be spent on our services to help people affected by the western wildfires.

**Other Western Wildfires Estimated Budget<sup>1,2,3</sup> (in millions)**

as of October 31, 2020

Expense Categories	Food, Shelter and Relief Items	Health and Emotional Support	Financial Assistance	Community Recovery	Total	Expense %
Financial assistance, food and other relief items	\$3.6	—	\$0.3	—	\$3.9	65%
Deployment of volunteers and staff (includes airfare, lodging, meals and vehicles)	\$0.4	\$0.1	—	—	\$0.5	8%
Full-time Red Cross employees	\$0.3	—	\$0.1	—	\$0.4	7%
Kitchen, shelter and other logistics that enable service delivery	\$0.2	—	—	—	\$0.2	3%
Freight, postage and warehousing	\$0.2	—	—	—	\$0.2	3%
IT, communications and call centers	\$0.1	—	—	—	\$0.1	2%
Equipment, maintenance and fueling of Red Cross emergency vehicles and rented trucks	\$0.1	—	—	—	\$0.1	2%
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$4.9</b>	<b>\$0.1</b>	<b>\$0.4</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>\$5.4</b>	<b>90%</b>
Management, general and fundraising <sup>4</sup>					\$0.6	10%
<b>Total Estimated Budget</b>					<b>\$6.0</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>1</sup>Figures are budget estimates and could change as needs change.

<sup>2</sup>Dollar figures in all tables are rounded to the nearest \$100K; therefore, expenses \$49,999 and below are represented as zero.

<sup>3</sup>Includes wildfire responses in Colorado, Montana, Washington and Wyoming.

<sup>4</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 approximately 19,000 employees and more than 300,000 volunteers, fundraising and communications functions, and other support services across all program lines. 90 cents of every dollar received for the western wildfires will be spent on our services to help people affected by the western wildfires.