



Southern and Midwest Tornadoes

SIX-MONTH UPDATE | JUNE 2022



Red Cross Helps Thousands Recover from Tornadoes

Last December, one of the most devastating tornado outbreaks in U.S. history tore across the South and Midwest. Tragically, this catastrophic disaster claimed dozens of lives.

For devastated residents, recovery has been a long and painful process. Throughout the region, thousands of homes were badly damaged or destroyed, and roads were impassable. Tens of thousands of survivors were left without power and, in some cases, without roofs over their heads.

In the wake of this heartbreaking destruction, thousands of American Red Cross disaster workers provided relief and comfort to people reeling from the storms. Volunteers were there to offer safe shelter, warm meals and a shoulder to cry on for people who'd lost everything. When survivors headed home, we equipped them with cleanup supplies to help with the arduous process of sorting through the wreckage left by a tornado.

Beyond the immediate response to meet the most urgent needs of affected individuals and families, your critical donation powers our long-term recovery efforts. In the six months since these storms struck, the Red Cross has helped thousands of survivors get back on their feet with direct financial assistance. With these funds, survivors are beginning to take the next steps on their recovery journey. The assistance helps pay for things like needed home repairs, replacement appliances and security deposits on new places to live.

In addition to providing direct financial assistance to survivors, we have funded Disaster Case Management caseworkers, who empower impacted residents to create recovery plans and help them navigate the process of putting their lives back together. These caseworkers verify needs and connect families with donated goods, financial assistance and organizations able to repair or rebuild their homes.



Winner speaks with a Red Cross volunteer at a shelter in Bowling Green, Kentucky, in the aftermath of the tornadoes. Winner came to the U.S. just as the COVID-19 pandemic was hitting after spending 24 years in a refugee camp in Tanzania. Photo by Marko Kocic/American Red Cross

Helping Survivors Bridge the Gap to Recovery

The financial barriers to recovery — especially after a major disaster like this — can be staggering. To help people affected by the December tornadoes overcome these obstacles, the Red Cross has distributed millions of dollars in financial assistance. With these funds, survivors can replace lost medical items, make a down payment on a vehicle and cover other expenses that stand in the way of recovery. Given the scale of this disaster, this aid included additional recovery funds to help some of the hardest-hit residents address unmet needs and begin rebuilding their lives.

As of June 10, 2022, we have provided approximately \$6.8 million in relief and recovery financial assistance, helping thousands of individuals and families affected by the December tornadoes. For survivors, these funds empower them to make their own decisions and take control of their recovery. What’s more, this money is available quickly, often the same day residents meet with caseworkers. Sometimes, this money comes before insurance payments, allowing survivors to leave temporary shelter, begin home repairs or take other steps to return to normal sooner than they could otherwise.

Our work to help people after a disaster is highly collaborative. Trained Red Cross volunteers and employees work hand in hand with partners, including other nonprofits, civic organizations, government bodies and local businesses, to ensure survivors’ needs are



Red Cross volunteer Ellen Green conducts damage assessment in Monette, Arkansas, in the wake of last December’s tornadoes. Photo by John Brimley/American Red Cross

met. Furthermore, the Red Cross aids in recovery by bringing partners together. We help connect organizations to the communities that need their services. We also engage with other organizations to avoid duplication of services and ensure donor dollars are used efficiently.

Along with distributing direct financial assistance, our recovery efforts include supporting work provided by other nonprofits. As we look to the future, we will focus on funding projects to help people repair and rebuild their homes, as well as programs to support survivors’ mental health needs.

Response at a Glance*

More than **1,100 Red Cross disaster workers** mounted a massive response to help people impacted by these tornadoes. They have:



119,300

Served more than **119,300 meals and snacks** with partners



57,100

Provided nearly **57,100 overnight shelter and hotel stays** with partners



52,100

Distributed nearly **52,100 relief items**



4,800

Opened more than **4,800 cases to provide recovery support**

*Cumulative figures in Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee as of June 10, 2022

Sarah Hibbs – Dawson Springs, Kentucky



Sarah Hibbs and her husband, John, received Red Cross recovery assistance after their house was torn apart by a tornado. Photo courtesy of Sarah Hibbs

When the tornadoes came through Dawson Springs, Kentucky, last December, Sarah Hibbs' home was hit hard. "Almost everything inside was ruined," Sarah said. "The house is still standing, but because of water damage, it was a very huge loss for us."

As Sarah and her husband tried to put the pieces of their lives back together, the Red Cross reached out to them to offer support. "I'm not sure how they knew we needed assistance," Sarah said.

The money helped the family with expenses insurance didn't cover and other pressing costs — like food and clothing. "We could not be more grateful," Sarah said. "We have appreciated the Red Cross so much.... There are always things that insurance doesn't cover."

Sarah also praised how fast and simple it was to access these badly needed funds. "It was very simple; it was very direct; the turnaround was lightning fast," Sarah said, noting the money was deposited in her account the same day she spoke to the Red Cross. "It was appreciated greatly when everything else was slow and painful."

"We could not be more grateful. We have appreciated the Red Cross so much."

Sarah Hibbs, who lost nearly everything to tornado-related flooding

Sonya Johnson – Leachville, Arkansas

Sonya Johnson, her husband and their daughter hunkered down in their Leachville, Arkansas, home when a tornado barreled through their neighborhood last December. Thankfully, the family weathered the storm safely, but their home was badly damaged.

"The struggle has been real," Sonya said. Months after the disaster, most of the Johnsons' remaining possessions were still in two storage units sitting in their front yard.

In the tornado's aftermath, the Red Cross provided recovery assistance to help the Johnsons meet some of their most pressing needs, including bills, groceries and gas. Sonya said, "I have seen firsthand how the American Red Cross was there when I needed them." She noted that the funds made it possible for her to afford the gas to attend a funeral an eight-hour drive from home.

"I am very thankful that the money was there when I needed it," Sonya said. "The donations made it less stressful," she added. "We were already in the process of trying to pick up the pieces of what was left of our home."

"I have seen firsthand how the American Red Cross was there when I needed them."

Sonya Johnson, whose home was badly damaged in the tornado outbreak



Sonya Johnson poses with her daughter and husband. Red Cross assistance helped the family with essentials like groceries and clothing in the aftermath of last December's tornadoes. Photo courtesy of Sonya Johnson

Shelly Labouve – Trumann, Arkansas



When a tornado tore through the home where Shelly Labouve's ex-husband and daughter were, it threw them into the sky and dropped them two blocks away, leaving both severely injured. Shelly's daughter suffered multiple broken bones and required hospitalization in Memphis. Meanwhile, the girl's father was in a coma for 12 days.

Shelly Labouve helped her daughter and her ex-husband recover after the two were seriously injured in the December tornadoes. Photo courtesy of Shelly Labouve

Since her ex-husband had no way to advocate for himself, Shelly made sure the two received recovery assistance. These funds were key to the family's ability to move past this

traumatic experience. "To go through a tornado — it just uproots your life. If you were in their shoes, literally having nothing left, those funds help cover the main, immediate needs of what you need for everyday living," Shelly said.

"It was one thing I didn't have to worry about.... It let me focus my efforts on helping my loved ones recover."

Shelly Labouve, whose loved ones were severely injured

Red Cross financial assistance helped Shelly pay for gas to drive from Jonesboro, Arkansas, to Memphis during her daughter's hospital stay. Phone communication was essential, and Shelly used the recovery dollars to pay for cellphone service for her daughter and ex-husband. The money also helped cover the family's ongoing living expenses.

"In addition to the financial help it gave us, it also helped us so much emotionally during a difficult time," Shelly said. "It was one thing I didn't have to worry about. I had enough on my plate, and it took a big load off my mind. It let me focus my efforts on helping my loved ones recover."

Keith Cardwell – Kenton, Tennessee

Keith Cardwell and his family rode out last December's tornado outbreak in a neighbor's shelter. When the storm passed, Keith emerged to heartbreak, finding his house destroyed and "total destruction all around."

The family was left with nothing, Keith said. "Lost everything we had. When we got into that house, even our clothes were lost."

In the storm's aftermath, Keith connected with the Red Cross to explain his situation. "They could not have been any more helpful," Keith said, adding that he referred other neighbors to the Red Cross.

In the family's hour of need, Red Cross workers helped to replace eyeglasses for Keith's wife and daughter and provided them with warm blankets.

To help with ongoing needs, the Red Cross also provided the family with recovery assistance funds to help pay for essentials, like new clothing. Keith said his family had been wearing the same muddy clothing for days after the storm. The funds also helped the family replace other household items lost in the storm.

"Red Cross was a huge help," Keith said.



Keith Cardwell, pictured above, and his family lost their home to the December tornadoes. Photo courtesy of Keith Cardwell



Red Cross volunteer Joyce Monnin hands a hot meal to a man days after a tornado damaged most of the houses in this residential neighborhood of Mayfield, Kentucky. Photo by Marko Kokic/American Red Cross

Looking Ahead: Supporting Community Recovery Needs

When a major disaster strikes, the Red Cross focuses not only on the unmet needs of individuals and families, but also on helping communities as a whole recover. Since the emergency response to the tornadoes ended, we have worked closely with local partners to identify ongoing recovery needs in the affected communities. In turn, we are investing in critical partner-run programs to meet them. These efforts, which are now ramping up and will roll out in the coming months, will deliver vital aid to tornado survivors in the months and years ahead.

One key focal area is mental health support — a critical need in the wake of devastating disasters. A Red Cross grant to the University of Louisville will help them provide mental health services to vulnerable populations, such as low-income communities, who may have difficulty accessing these services. Among other things, these funds will boost the capacity of local mental health systems and help train more professionals.

Other groups and initiatives that will soon receive Red Cross grant funding include a project to rebuild

a women's shelter destroyed by the storms; a community foundation that helps people with long-term recovery; capacity funding for long-term recovery groups; and programming to help children process the trauma of experiencing a disaster.

Generous Donors Make Relief and Recovery Possible

Thanks to our compassionate donors, the Red Cross has raised approximately \$50.1 million, including the value of critical donated goods and services, to help people affected by the December 2021 Southern and Midwest Tornadoes.

As of June 10, 2022, the Red Cross had already spent or made commitments to spend approximately \$16.6 million on emergency relief and recovery efforts for these storms. We will continue to program the remaining funds to provide and support services for both individual and community long-term recovery in the affected communities.

Southern and Midwest Tornadoes Expenses and Commitments (in millions)^{1,2}

as of June 10, 2022 (\$50.1 million raised)

Expense Categories	Food, Shelter and Relief Items	Health and Emotional Support	Financial Assistance	Community Recovery and Resilience	Total	Expense %
Financial assistance, food and other relief items	\$1.5	\$0.5	\$3.0	—	\$5.0	30%
Recovery programs	—	—	\$3.8	\$0.2	\$4.0	24%
Deployment of volunteers and staff (includes airfare, lodging, meals and vehicles)	\$1.2	\$0.6	\$0.6	—	\$2.4	14%
Full-time Red Cross employees	\$0.8	—	\$0.2	\$0.3	\$1.3	8%
Kitchen, shelter and other logistics that enable service delivery	\$0.6	—	—	—	\$0.6	4%
Freight, postage and warehousing	\$0.6	—	—	—	\$0.6	4%
Temporary disaster hires	\$0.3	—	—	\$0.2	\$0.5	3%
IT, communications and call centers	\$0.2	\$0.1	\$0.1	—	\$0.4	2%
Equipment, maintenance and fueling of Red Cross emergency vehicles and rented trucks	\$0.1	—	—	—	\$0.1	1%
Total Program Expenses	\$5.3	\$1.2	\$7.7	\$0.7	\$14.9	90%
Management, general and fundraising					\$1.7	10%
Total Spent and Committed					\$16.6	100%
Additional budgeted recovery programs					\$30.1	
Management, general and fundraising remaining to be applied ³					\$3.4	
Total Budget⁴					\$50.1	

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

²Includes tornado responses in Arkansas, Kentucky, Missouri and Tennessee.

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 more than 17,000 employees and nearly 300,000 volunteers, fundraising and communications functions, and other support services across all program lines. 90 cents of every dollar spent for Southern and Midwest Tornadoes will support delivering care and comfort to help people affected by these storms.

⁴As of June 10, 2022, we have raised approximately \$50.1 million for the Southern and Midwest Tornadoes. Kentucky Tornadoes donations are supporting the response in Kentucky, and Southern and Midwest Tornadoes donations are supporting all responses across impacted states.

▶ For more information about our response to this disaster and stories of people we've helped, please visit our Southern and Midwest Tornadoes story map at redcross.org/southern-midwest-tornadoes.

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.