



**American  
Red Cross**

**MARCH 2024**

## **Hawaii Wildfires: Six-Month Report**

### RESPONSE AT A GLANCE



More than **2.54 million** meals and snacks served with partners



More than **1.22 million** overnight shelter and hotel stays provided with partners



Reached an estimated **32,750** people with disaster relief and recovery services, including financial assistance

Cumulative figures as of February 8, 2024.

### Standing with Hard-Hit Residents to Help Meet Ongoing Needs

Six months after the life-changing wildfires on Maui, the American Red Cross has reached an estimated 32,750 people with disaster relief and recovery services. However, thousands of people are still struggling to recover from the destruction the fires caused to homes and livelihoods. Powered by the compassionate commitment of generous donors, the Red Cross will remain by the sides of the most severely affected individuals and families to understand and help meet their ongoing needs.

Dedicated Red Cross volunteers have provided daily support to displaced residents who continue to shelter in local hotel rooms due to an acute shortage of affordable housing. In addition to meals and other essentials, our workers offer a daily point of contact to assist wildfire survivors with recovery planning, help them connect with available recovery resources from our partners and much more as they begin to rebuild shattered lives and communities.

Cash assistance is another key element of our recovery support. The Red Cross offered Immediate Assistance funds shortly after the wildfires to help with urgent needs like buying groceries, clothing and other essentials. We have also delivered additional Bridge Recovery Assistance to many of the hardest-hit residents — whose homes suffered major damage or were destroyed — as they seek to overcome significant recovery roadblocks and get back on their feet. As of February 8, 2024, the Red Cross has provided **financial assistance totaling approximately \$24.8 million**, reaching thousands of people reeling from these devastating fires.

▶ **To learn more about our response and the people we've helped, please visit our [Hawaii Wildfires Story Map \(redcross.org/hawaii-wildfires\)](https://redcross.org/hawaii-wildfires).**

Above: Stephany and Fernando Sepulveda visit Red Cross volunteer Wanda Hernandez at the Lahaina Civic Center on Maui. Earlier in the week, the Red Cross provided the Sepulvedas with financial assistance to help them recover from the wildfires. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross



Beyond direct cash assistance to survivors, the Red Cross has also funded grants to local nonprofit partners with specialized expertise and skills to aid in community recovery. This includes a \$1.5M grant to the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) to administer the host family program, a program co-created by the Red Cross, to provide temporary housing solutions to survivors. It also includes a \$4.9M grant for the rental assistance program to help those who are ineligible for FEMA assistance. And we have brought on community members who were impacted by the fires as temporary employees to support ongoing disaster relief and recovery on Maui. These local hires have in-depth knowledge of their community and its people, serving as cultural experts to help ensure that recovery efforts are effective and useful.

**“You won’t find another community that shows up like ours!”**

**JENNY WORTH,  
RED CROSS DISASTER  
PROGRAM MANAGER  
FOR MAUI**

### **‘It’s Our Privilege and Responsibility to Give Something Back’**

Jenny Worth has lived in Maui for 15 years. Originally from California, she raised her two kids here, who are now a senior in high school and a freshman in college. The Red Cross Disaster Program Manager for Maui, Jenny describes her work as giving her “incredible purpose.”

This incredible purpose was never more apparent than on the night of August 8, 2023. Vivid memories surface when Jenny remembers the night of the Maui wildfires — how her husband opened a shelter, and then as the fire burned closer, woke the local principal so they could move the shelter to a safer location at the school; how her children evacuated to the beach alone, while their parents helped shelter hundreds of Lahaina residents, some brought in soaking wet after fleeing into the ocean to escape the flames.

As the shelter filled up with a mix of locals and visitors, Jenny saw her community turn out in force. Thousands of new volunteers signed up in the first two days to help their friends and neighbors. “You won’t find another community that shows up like ours,” she said. Jenny believes it’s the concept of “kuleana,” a Hawaiian word that roughly translates as “responsibility,” or “privilege,” but means so much more, that moves everyone to help.

Above: Red Crossers Douglas Warne and Jillian Robertson deliver dinner to Hiva Takafua and his family, which includes three small children. With Red Cross support, the family is staying at a Maui hotel after losing their home to the wildfires. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross



“Everyone who comes here takes something home,” she said. “Whether it’s a photo or a souvenir or just the feel of the ocean. And it’s our privilege and responsibility to give something back. To Lahaina. To the community.”

## Cash Assistance Helps Ease the Recovery Journey for Wildfire Survivors

Powered by the generosity of countless donors who gave to help people when their lives were upended by the Hawaii Wildfires, the Red Cross has provided financial assistance and more to help some of the hardest-hit residents bridge gaps on their ongoing recovery journey.

**“I don’t want to see one more obstacle put up for these kids.”**

**VELMA PANLASIGNI**

**VELMA’S STORY.** Velma Panlasigni returned to Lahaina Civic Center to present Red Cross volunteer Kat Walsh with a gift on her last day on Maui. Earlier in the week, Kat helped Velma receive Red Cross Bridge Recovery Assistance after her home was damaged in the wildfires. Velma, a teacher, knows many of the kids who were attending high schools in the Lahaina area. Though many of her classes are virtual in the wake of the fires, she tries to keep meeting as many students in person as she can. “I don’t want to see one more obstacle put up for these kids,” she said.

Velma also started a support group for teachers and staff at her school, watching as even the more reserved maintenance workers began to open up and share how the fire affected them. The assistance she received from the Red Cross will help replace what she’s lost and begin her recovery, even as she helps guide others through theirs.



Above: Red Cross Disaster Program Manager and Maui resident Jenny Worth shares a hug with a fellow Red Crosser as she recalls the night of the Maui wildfires. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross. Right: Wildfire survivor Velma Panlasigni presents Red Cross volunteer Kat Walsh with a farewell gift at the Lahaina Civic Center in Maui. Velma received financial assistance from the Red Cross to help with her recovery needs. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

**MAHINA'S STORY.** Wildfire survivor Mahina Ah Sam gasped when volunteer Kat Walsh told her she would be receiving financial assistance from the Red Cross. “This is such a huge weight off my chest,” she said.

Alternating between placing her hand on her heart and pressing the envelope to her cheek, she explained that she would be able to repair her car, as well as get food, clothing and other essentials. For moments, she was simply speechless. “I’m sorry, I’m just getting emotional,” Mahina said. “Just anything would have been great. Getting this is huge.”

**“This is such a huge weight off my chest.”**

**MAHINA AH SAM**



Mahina Ah Sam shares a joyful moment with a Red Cross volunteer after learning she would receive Bridge Recovery Assistance from the Red Cross. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

**ALAN'S STORY.** Alan Kawaguchi paused and thought deeply when asked about his recovery after losing his home to the wildfires. Alan can trace his family’s presence on Maui back to the early 1900s, and he worried the close-knit community, including his own extended family, will lose the sense of connectedness that makes it special. The large family—his son, Casey, is one of 29 grandchildren—is close, with children instructed from a young age to respect their elders and feel fortunate for all they have.

The Red Cross is helping the Kawaguchis with financial assistance to put toward their next home as they also work to rebuild the strong community ties that keep them in Lahaina. “When anyone asks how I’m feeling, in spite of everything, I feel fortunate,” Alan said.

**“When anyone asks how I’m feeling, in spite of everything, I feel fortunate.”**

**ALAN KAWAGUCHI**



Maui resident Alan Kawaguchi embraces Red Cross volunteer Wanda Hernandez after receiving financial assistance from the Red Cross. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

**BETTY ANN’S STORY.** Betty Ann and Edward Napolis lost their home of 15 years to the wildfires on Maui. Their car remains trapped under debris, but Betty Ann said she was too emotional to even think about retrieving it.

“My friend said, ‘Did you talk to the Red Cross?’” Betty Ann recalled. “But I said I didn’t know how to do those things. So, I called 1-800-RED CROSS and the guy who answered was really nice.” With the help of financial assistance provided by the Red Cross, Betty is now managing the couple’s recovery journey, just as she’s managed her own business for over 38 years.

She’s been married for 57 years, but Betty Ann told us her history with the island is even longer. “I was born and raised here,” she said proudly. “I’m a local girl!”

**“My friend said, ‘Did you talk to the Red Cross?’”**

**BETTY ANN NAPOLIS**



The Red Cross provided Betty Ann Napolis and her husband with financial assistance after they lost their home to the wildfires. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

## Compassionate Donors Enable Red Cross Hawaii Wildfires Response

Thanks to compassionate support from the public, the Red Cross has raised \$90.2 million — including the value of critical donated goods and services — designated for our response to help people affected by the Hawaii Wildfires. As of February 8, 2024, the Red Cross had already spent or made commitments to spend approximately \$66.3 million on emergency relief and recovery efforts for the Hawaii Wildfires. We will continue to program the remaining funds to provide and support services for both individual and community recovery in the impacted regions.

| Hawaii Wildfires Six-Month Expenses and Commitments <sup>1,2</sup> (in millions)     |                                |                              |                      |                                   |               |             |
|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| as of February 8, 2024   |                                |                              |                      |                                   |               |             |
| 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                                    | \$10.7                         | \$0.3                        | \$12.2               | \$3.2                             | \$26.4        | 40%         |
| Long-term recovery programs to help unmet needs                                      | –                              | –                            | \$12.6               | –                                 | \$12.6        | 19%         |
| Deployment of volunteers and staff (includes airfare, lodging, meals and vehicles)   | \$5.4                          | \$2.0                        | \$1.8                | –                                 | \$9.2         | 14%         |
| Temporary disaster hires   | \$2.5                          | \$1.0                        | \$0.9                | \$0.1                             | \$4.5         | 7%          |
| Full-time Red Cross employees  | \$2.8                          | \$0.2                        | \$0.8                | \$0.6                             | \$4.4         | 7%          |
| IT, communications and call centers  | \$0.6                          | \$0.2                        | \$0.7                | –                                 | \$1.5         | 2%          |
| Kitchen, shelter and other logistics that enable service delivery                    | \$0.3                          | \$0.1                        | \$0.1                | –                                 | \$0.5         | 1%          |
| Freight, postage and warehousing   | \$0.3                          | –                            | –                    | –                                 | \$0.3         | 0%          |
| Equipment, maintenance and fueling of Red Cross emergency vehicles and rented trucks | \$0.3                          | –                            | –                    | –                                 | \$0.3         | 0%          |
| <b>Total Program Expenses</b>  | <b>\$22.9</b>                  | <b>\$3.8</b>                 | <b>\$29.1</b>        | <b>\$3.9</b>                      | <b>\$59.7</b> | <b>90%</b>  |
| Management, general and fundraising <sup>3</sup>                                     |                                |                              |                      |                                   | \$6.6         | 10%         |
| <b>Total Spent &amp; Committed</b>   |                                |                              |                      |                                   | <b>\$66.3</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| Program Dollars Remaining  |                                |                              |                      |                                   | \$21.5        |             |
| Management, general and fundraising remaining to be applied                          |                                |                              |                      |                                   | \$2.4         |             |
| <b>Total Budget</b>  |                                |                              |                      |                                   | <b>\$90.2</b> |             |

<sup>1</sup> Dollar figures are rounded to the nearest \$100,000; therefore, expenses \$49,999 and below are represented as zero.

<sup>2</sup> Does not include expenses incurred for emergency hotel stays and associated meals for more than 6,000 wildfire survivors. These significant expenses are to be reimbursed by the State of Hawaii.

<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, payroll and similar systems to support nearly 18,000 employees and approximately 275,000 volunteers, fundraising and communications functions, and other support services across all program lines. Ninety cents of every dollar spent for the Hawaii Wildfires will support delivering care and comfort to help people affected by this disaster.

*Thank you!*



**American Red Cross**

The Red Cross must be ready for every disaster, big or small, and we respond to about 65,000 disasters each year — including 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 throughout their recovery. Your donation helps us fulfill this promise. We are grateful for your trust.