



**American  
Red Cross**

## California Wildfires

One-Month Update | November 2017

## Red Cross Brings Relief and Comfort to Northern California Fire Survivors

In October 2017, a series of devastating wildfires engulfed over 245,000 acres across several Northern California counties, causing more than 40 deaths and destroying thousands of homes.

First igniting in the late evening and early morning hours of October 8-9, the deadly blazes spread rapidly due to high winds and dry conditions—striking many neighborhoods with little warning and forcing families to flee at a moment’s notice. In the chaotic weeks that followed, at least 90,000 people were displaced from their homes by the fast-moving fires, often taking little more than what they could carry.

In response, more than 1,000 American Red Cross volunteers and employees—many of them from local communities and Red Cross chapters—have worked tirelessly since the disaster struck to deliver relief and comfort for people whose lives were turned upside down. Powered by generous donors, they joined with our disaster partners to help neighbors in need, providing safe refuge, warm meals and relief supplies, as well as

offering vital emotional support to fire survivors coping with heartbreaking losses and the stress of evacuation.

When the entire town of Calistoga was evacuated ahead of the approaching firestorm, many residents—including at least a thousand agricultural workers—drove to the Red Cross shelter in Napa.

Among them was José, who fled with his wife, three daughters and the clothes on their backs. They stayed in a Red Cross shelter for four days before getting the green light to return home. “We had everything we needed and felt safe and secure while we were there,” he said.

José and his family have always donated small amounts to the Red Cross and now, he says, his children understand why.

“Now they know where their donations went,” he said. “I tell them, we had cots, blanket, and pillows to sleep at night. We had all the food we needed to sustain us. All of that money came from donations from people like us.”

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“Through some of the worst wildfires in our state’s history, I have been inspired by the dedication of our volunteers and resilience of Californians. Thanks to generous donors and the many community members who selflessly jumped in to help their neighbors, the Red Cross has provided impacted residents with shelter, food, emotional support and needed supplies—from the first frightening evacuations through the stressful weeks that followed. Today, our volunteers, employees and disaster partners continue working with wildfire survivors to offer them support and guidance on their road to recovery.”

Trevor Rigger, CEO, American Red Cross of the Bay Area and Northern California Coastal Region

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After the wildfires were contained and the smoke cleared, the Red Cross remained by the sides of heartbroken residents as they returned to flame-ravaged homes to sift through the ashes. Many had lost everything. Volunteers traveled in emergency response vehicles through hard-hit neighborhoods, providing residents with wildfire relief kits, including rakes, shovels, masks, gloves, garbage bags, sifters, eye-drops and sanitary wipes.

Recovery will be a long and challenging process for the thousands of individuals and families coping with the aftermath of these destructive blazes. As wildfire survivors begin to pick up the pieces, trained Red Cross caseworkers are meeting with them one-on-one, providing an opportunity to share their needs, ask

questions, and—for those who qualify—obtain financial assistance. They are also helping affected residents create recovery plans and connecting them with critical services and available resources to get back on their feet.

Because disasters like these deadly wildfires create more needs than any one organization can meet on their own, recovery will be a large team effort that involves the entire response community. In the months ahead, the Red Cross will work alongside our disaster partners, including government agencies, other non-profit groups, faith-based organizations, area businesses and others, to coordinate ongoing relief and recovery efforts for people with unmet needs.

### 'The sadness and anxiety have been taken away by this place'

It had already been a rough day. Bill Hahn, 84, brought his wife Patsy back from the hospital—with bruises and a neck brace following a fall—to their home in Calistoga, California. Later, they were awakened by someone banging on the door at 1 a.m., telling them to evacuate immediately due to an approaching wildfire.

Taking only a few valuables, they quickly fled their home, eventually finding refuge at the Napa Valley Community College shelter. After they had slept, eaten and been made as comfortable as possible, shelter volunteers learned they were about to celebrate their 66th wedding anniversary. The next thing they knew, 200 people were helping them celebrate—complete with a cake and flowers. The couple was deeply moved by the caring attitude of the Red Cross and community workers at the shelter.

"I am so impressed with the Red Cross," Patsy said. "Everyone has been so sweet to us," she added. "They protect me. A nurse even took out my stitches this morning, and some kind woman helped me take a shower."

"Everyone has been so wonderful to us," Bill said. "The sadness and anxiety have been taken away by this place."



## Response at a Glance

American Red Cross volunteers and employees have mounted a massive response to help tens of thousands of people impacted by the October 2017 wildfires in Northern California.



More than **189,200 meals and snacks** served with partners



More than **144,300 relief items** distributed



More than **27,900 overnight shelter stays** provided with partners



More than **15,300 health and mental health services** provided



More than **than 2,300 cases** opened to help people in need

Cumulative figures as of November 13, 2017

## California Wildfires Relief and Recovery: Estimated Budget

Generous Red Cross donors are supporting ongoing relief and recovery for people affected by the October 2017 wildfires in Northern California.

California Wildfires Estimated Budget <sup>1</sup> (in millions) as of November 9, 2017 (\$10.7 million raised)						
Expense Categories	Food, Shelter and Relief Items	Health and Emotional Support	Immediate Financial Assistance	Individual and Community Recovery	Total	Expense %
Financial assistance, food and other relief items	\$1.4	\$0.2	\$2.3		\$3.9	36.4%
Long-term recovery programs to help unmet needs				\$2.1	\$2.1	19.6%
Deployment and maintenance of volunteers and staff (includes airfare, lodging, meals and vehicles)	\$1.6	\$0.3	\$0.2		\$2.1	19.6%
Freight and warehousing	\$0.4				\$0.4	3.7%
Full-time Red Cross employees	\$0.3		\$0.1		\$0.4	3.7%
IT, communications, and call centers	\$0.3				\$0.3	2.8%
Kitchen, shelter and other logistics that enable service delivery	\$0.2				\$0.2	1.9%
Equipment, maintenance and fueling of Red Cross emergency vehicles and rented trucks	\$0.2				\$0.2	1.9%
Temporary disaster hires	\$0.1				\$0.1	0.9%
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$4.5</b>	<b>\$0.5</b>	<b>\$2.6</b>	<b>\$2.1</b>	<b>\$9.7</b>	<b>91%</b>
Management, general and fundraising <sup>2</sup>					\$1.0	9%
<b>Total Estimated Budget</b>					<b>\$10.7</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

<sup>2</sup> Management, general and fundraising expenses support our work at its core and are indispensable to running the organization and helping people in need. Includes the people and systems to maintain our IT networks, HR and payroll systems to support our 23,000+ staff and 300,000 volunteers, fundraising and communications functions and other support services. 91 cents of every dollar received for the California Wildfires will be spent on our services to help people affected by the California Wildfires.

*Thank you!*

The American Red Cross must be prepared to respond quickly when disasters occur. From home fires that affect a single family to hurricanes that impact millions, those in need turn to the Red Cross in their darkest hours because they know they can depend on us with vital relief when it's needed most. Your donation helps us fulfill this trust.