



**American  
Red Cross**

# Hurricane Florence **ONE-YEAR UPDATE**

September 2019





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“It’s good here. We are safe.”

Claudia Martinez, Wilson, North Carolina

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**When Hurricane Florence devastated communities across the Carolinas, thousands of American Red Cross disaster workers mounted a massive response to help tens of thousands of people in need.**

**They provided shelter, relief and comfort for families like Claudia Martinez and her six children. Claudia quickly found safe refuge for her family when Hurricane Florence was forecast to impact her home.**

Above: Claudia Martinez and her children found safety at a Red Cross shelter in Wilson, N.C., when Hurricane Florence threatened their home. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross.

Cover: Passion London shares her story with a Red Cross worker outside her home in New Bern, N.C. Left with no place to stay after her mother’s house was severely damaged by Florence, Red Cross financial assistance helped Passion and her 16-year-old daughter move into a new home. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross.

## A Message from Gail McGovern, President and CEO, American Red Cross

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In September 2018, Hurricane Florence battered communities in North and South Carolina and beyond. As Florence crept inland—bringing record-breaking rainfall that caused catastrophic flooding—thousands of dedicated Red Cross volunteers and employees joined with our disaster relief partners to deliver shelter, food and comfort for residents facing trauma and loss. In the year since Florence’s landfall, we have continued to stand with survivors as they recover and rebuild.

When I visited a Red Cross shelter at UNC-Chapel Hill in the days after Florence’s landfall, I was struck—as I so often am—by the courage and resiliency of the storm’s survivors. In the face of such difficult circumstances, shelter residents’ positive attitudes and support for each other was remarkable.

I was also inspired by our dedicated Red Cross volunteers—including a seasoned veteran on her 80<sup>th</sup> deployment and many spontaneous volunteers from local universities and communities. With contagious enthusiasm and energy, they offered compassionate support for people facing stressful evacuations and an uncertain future. In addition, I was impressed by the strong partnership of local government and community organizations, as well as the National Guard, which helped us transport food and supplies to hard-to-reach areas.

Our response to help Hurricane Florence survivors was made possible by the extraordinary generosity of donors all over the country. Their gifts helped provide affected residents with immediate shelter, food and relief items, as well as basic health and mental health services. They also enabled the Red Cross to help families clean and repair their homes, to give emotional support to those who had been through so much, and to provide financial assistance of more than \$20 million to date for people working to put their lives back together.

In the year since Florence struck, the Red Cross has remained by the sides of heartbroken residents, helping them pick up the pieces and rebuild their lives. We’ve provided additional financial assistance for households in need of recovery support and are awarding grants to partner nonprofits working in local communities to aid residents with unmet needs.

While many individuals and families impacted by Hurricane Florence have made great progress over the last 12 months, much work remains to be done on the road to recovery. For as long as we are needed, the Red Cross will be there to lend a helping hand, powered by the commitment of our steadfast donors and tireless volunteers. I am profoundly grateful for your trust.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gail McGovern". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Gail McGovern



# Red Cross Helps People Left Reeling by Florence's Catastrophic Impact

In September 2018, as Hurricane Florence slowly bore down on the Eastern North Carolina coast, the Red Cross stood ready to assist threatened communities. Thanks to the year-round support of our disaster relief donors, we quickly marshaled thousands of trained volunteers and prepositioned relief supplies, plus the vehicles and equipment needed to deliver relief to devastated neighborhoods and support shelters and field kitchens.

As Florence came ashore near Wilmington, N.C., and during its slow trek across North and South Carolina, the Red Cross was there—boosted by a generous outpouring of support from the public. In the storm's wake, rising rivers and streams continued to inundate communities in the Carolinas for days and even weeks—for many residents, this was the second major hurricane and flooding event they had endured in three years.

Bringing help when it was needed most, our dedicated volunteers and employees worked around the clock through treacherous conditions, providing vital aid for tens of thousands of residents impacted by this latest devastating hurricane.

## Shelter

For tens of thousands who evacuated before Florence made landfall—or those who fled their homes just ahead of rising floodwaters—the most immediate need was a safe and dry place to stay the night. Joining with government and community partners, the Red Cross helped support shelters across the Carolinas, ensuring that disaster survivors had a refuge to lay their heads, regular meals and other vital support from trained volunteer staff.

From cots, blankets and meals to basic health services and emotional support, these compassionate volunteers worked day and night to bring comfort to tens of thousands of people dealing with the stress of evacuation and uncertainty about when or if they could return to their homes.

## Food

Many shelter residents evacuated as Florence approached; others were forced from their homes as rivers and streams continued to flood for days after landfall. Whatever needs brought them there,



Top: Red Cross volunteer Elizabeth meets Cheryl Jarman and her dog Angel, of Jacksonville, N.C., at a Red Cross shelter in Chapel Hill, N.C. Cheryl's return home to assess the damage was delayed by road closures and flooding, but the pet-friendly shelter provided a comfortable refuge for her and Angel. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross. Bottom: Red Springs, N.C., resident Norma Chavos was grateful for the hot dinners delivered to her community by Red Cross volunteers. Access to the neighborhood was still difficult 11 days after Florence made landfall. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross.

the availability of warm meals and nourishing snacks brought comfort amid stressful circumstances. And when it was safe for residents to return to storm-ravaged communities, Red Cross volunteers in emergency response vehicles visited them to provide water, snacks and meals prepared by steadfast Red Cross partners like Southern Baptist Disaster Relief.

## Relief Items

Individuals and families fleeing Florence's destructive impact often had little time to prepare. To help residents displaced from their homes, the Red Cross provided comfort kits containing basic supplies like toothbrushes, personal hygiene items,



deodorant and shampoo, as well as other essentials like diapers. And later, as people began the backbreaking work of sorting through storm debris and cleaning out flood-damaged homes, we delivered coolers, bug spray and cleanup supplies like rakes, shovels and buckets.

### Individual Care

Along with providing food, relief items and shelter, Red Cross mental health and spiritual care workers met one-on-one with residents to provide emotional support as they coped with stressful evacuations and damaged homes. Volunteer health workers were also on hand to offer first aid, monitor shelter residents with medical needs, and help them replace prescription medications or eyeglasses. In addition, our Disabilities Integration team offered support for people with disabilities and those with access and functional needs, who are often disproportionately affected by disasters.

### Immediate Financial Assistance

In addition to relief supplies and comfort, the Red Cross also provided immediate financial assistance to hurricane survivors in the weeks after Florence's landfall. Thanks to support from generous donors, we provided \$600 each to thousands of severely impacted individuals and families, helping them meet some of their most urgent needs in the storm's aftermath. This immediate assistance helped families with basics like groceries, utilities, clothing, or help with rent and security deposits.



Top: Timothy Hickson, of Spring Lake, N.C., welcomes relief and cleanup supplies from Red Cross volunteers. His home was badly damaged by Florence's floodwaters. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross. Bottom: Red Cross volunteer Debbie Hayden, RN, helps a shelter resident in Chapel Hill, N.C., with her medication. No visit is complete for Debbie without listening intently to any further needs they may have. Photo by Daniel Cima/American Red Cross.

**In response to Florence's devastation, thousands of Red Cross disaster workers—over 90 percent volunteers—helped meet the urgent needs of affected residents.**



More than **131,500 overnight shelter stays** provided with partners



More than **1.6 million meals and snacks** served with partners



More than **336,500 relief items** distributed



More than **73,900 individual care** contacts made



Over **6,600** severely affected households provided with **immediate financial assistance**

—All figures are cumulative and reflect Red Cross response efforts since September 14, 2018

## Recovery Program Provides Ongoing Support for Florence Survivors

When the emergency phase of our response ended, the Red Cross turned its focus to planning and delivering programs to help people recover and address lingering community needs. Now, one year after Hurricane Florence inundated communities across the Carolinas, the Red Cross continues to provide recovery support.

We are working with local and state governments, nonprofit partners, faith-based organizations and community-based long-term recovery groups to provide ongoing assistance for people impacted by this devastating storm. As of September 3, 2019, the Red Cross has spent approximately \$18 million to support individual and community recovery from Hurricane Florence. These funds have provided additional financial assistance to households that need extra help, as well as funding grants for community-based recovery services.

### Recovery Financial Assistance



Over **6,300** damaged or destroyed households provided with **recovery financial assistance** totaling approximately **\$15.9 million**

After our emergency response ended, the Red Cross provided additional financial assistance for severely impacted households in need of extra recovery support. We reached out to thousands of individuals and families whose primary homes were confirmed as suffering major damage or were destroyed. We also helped households that were not eligible for government assistance by working through local disaster case management agencies.

As of September 3, 2019, the Red Cross had made payments of \$2,500 each to more than 6,300 households. This assistance helped individuals and families pay for temporary housing, make essential repairs to flood-damaged homes, replace lost appliances and furniture, and much more. We spoke with a few of these families, and they generously took the time to share their stories.



The Riggs family received financial assistance from the Red Cross to help them recover from Hurricane Florence. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross.

### The Riggs Family, Wilmington, N.C.

As Hurricane Florence threatened to make a direct hit on their community, Amy Riggs and her family evacuated to Asheville, N.C., two days before landfall. With major roads into the area flooded and impassable, it was over a week before they could get back to their home.

“Then, once we did come home, we saw it was bad,” Amy said. A large tree had fallen on their house, causing severe damage that left it unlivable.

Just days later, while they were cleaning up the yard with volunteers who helped remove debris, a Red Cross worker stopped by to assess the damage and take photos. “A couple weeks later,” Amy said, “I got an email, and then y’all assisted us with the [\$2,500] donation.”

This Red Cross assistance went toward repairs on the home’s heavily damaged roof, while the Riggs stayed with relatives and then rented rooms from a family friend. In July 2019, with repairs nearing completion, the Riggs family was looking forward to moving back into their home and grateful for support from the Red Cross and other volunteers from as far away as Louisiana.

“You know,” Amy said, “it really helped a lot.”

### Passion London, New Bern, N.C.

Passion London and her 16-year-old daughter, who has Down Syndrome, lived with Passion’s mother in New Bern before Florence hit. “We rode out the storm with neighbors across the street,” she said. “But as the



waters rose, we ended up having to be rescued from their home the next day by boat.”

When her mother’s home sustained severe damage during the storm, Passion and her daughter were left with nowhere to go—until they received \$2,500 in assistance from the Red Cross that helped cover the expenses for them to move into a new rental home. “The money that we received from the Red Cross was truly a blessing,” she said. “My daughter now feels safe again and we feel so thankful for the Red Cross.”

This was Passion’s second time receiving help from the Red Cross. “In 2002, I was living in a single-wide mobile home that burned to the ground,” she said. “We lost everything, but the Red Cross was there, like they always are, ready to help us. I thank God for the Red Cross.”

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Passion London

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### **David Rawls, Havelock, N.C.**

Before Florence, David Rawls—a heavy equipment operator—was living alone in his home on land near the site of his grandparents’ old fishing camp. As the storm threatened, he got a few clothes and evacuated to Havelock to stay with his parents. “I didn’t think it was going to get that bad,” he said.

It was worse than he had dreamed. “At least 50 feet of his property was washed away in the storm—his home was destroyed. “It was surreal, that’s for sure,” he said. All his belongings were “out in the field.”

While going through his email, he came upon an offer of assistance from the Red Cross. “I almost thought it was a scam,” he said. “Somebody wants to give me something for nothing? Oh, come on! I hit submit, and 15 minutes later, I got a call.”

The Red Cross provided David with \$2,500 in financial assistance to help him get back on his feet. He used it to help meet many basic needs in Florence’s wake, including replacing lost clothing and buying groceries. “I really thank the Red Cross for what they did,” David said.



David Rawls (above) and Brenda Flynn (below) received financial assistance from the Red Cross to help them recover from Hurricane Florence. Photos by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross.

### **Brenda Flynn, Burgaw, N.C.**

Brenda Flynn had seen many storms come and go while living in her home of 13 years near Burgaw, N.C., but never a flood. Then Florence’s floodwaters rose as high as her window sills. “You didn’t have time to think and you didn’t have time to grab,” she said of her hurried evacuation. “You just get your necessities.”

Brenda and her little dog Maggie stayed at a friend’s house through the storm. The roads were washed out, and she hadn’t spoken to either of her two sons for days, because the cell towers were down. When she was finally able to return home, the realization hit. “I knew then everything was gone,” Brenda said.

Brenda was grateful for the financial assistance she received from the Red Cross. “I was thankful for it

because it helped me replace some clothes that I didn't have, and helped me pay some bills. And, you know, helped those that were giving me a place to stay with food and electricity." Today, Brenda and Maggie are living in a trailer provided by FEMA in nearby Rocky Point.

"You know material stuff you can get back," she said. Pointing to her small box of surviving photos, she added, "It's memories you can't get back. But at least we had Red Cross; we had FEMA. We had people there."

## Grants for Community-Based Recovery Services

Along with financial assistance for severely affected residents, the Red Cross is also supporting community-based recovery efforts in North and South Carolina through strategic grants to nonprofit organizations with a strong track record of providing vital services. With more than \$4 million awarded so far, grant recipients are providing a wide range of support in impacted communities across both states.

For example, the South Carolina Conference of the United Methodist Church was awarded a Red Cross grant to provide case management and reconstruction support to approximately 325 households in South Carolina. This support includes helping affected residents make recovery plans, assisting with repairs to damaged homes and connecting people with available resources provided by the Red Cross and other recovery partners.

Another grantee, Welvista, is a full-service nonprofit pharmacy helping uninsured and underserved South Carolinians gain access to prescription medications and pediatric dental services. They are assisting 425 patients affected by Hurricane Florence, a 20% increase in patients helped and prescriptions filled in the affected counties—including Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Georgetown, Horry, Marion and Marlboro counties.

In North Carolina, Red Cross grantee Baptists on Mission is working on housing repairs and rebuilding efforts to help get people get back in their homes, as well as housing and feeding volunteers.

This support made a real difference for Florence survivors like Gloria LeCraft, of New Bern, N.C. "Without Baptists On Mission and the American Red Cross, I don't know what we would have done," Gloria said.

"The amount that we received from [insurance] was not enough to make the repairs necessary for us to reoccupy our home," she added. "I am so thankful to them and the Red Cross for helping us get back into our home and begin to get back to normal."

Onslow Community Outreach, another North Carolina grant recipient, is working to help impacted families return to permanent housing. Their assistance to Florence survivors includes direct assistance for rent and temporary lodging as well as focused case management to monitor progress.

With Red Cross support, they have helped people like Mary Miles, aged 71. When the storm raged in and the waters rose, she feared for her life. After she was rescued by the fire department, Onslow Community Outreach provided her with food and a place to stay until she could return home.

To learn more about our Hurricane Florence recovery grants, including a complete list of grantees to date, please visit [redcross.org/florence](https://www.redcross.org/florence).



James Jarvis, executive director of the American Red Cross Eastern N.C. Region, and Carrie Fisher, site supervisor for Red Cross partner Baptists on Mission, speak with Gloria LeCraft, of New Bern. Badly damaged by Florence, Gloria's home is being repaired by Baptists on Mission with support from a Red Cross community grant. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross.



## Compassionate Supporters Fund Relief and Recovery

None of our response or recovery assistance would be possible without the extraordinary support of our donors. The Red Cross has raised \$69.4 million, including the value of critical donated goods and services, to help Hurricane Florence survivors in the Carolinas. As of September 3, 2019, the Red Cross had already programmed approximately \$57 million

on emergency relief and recovery efforts for people affected by Hurricane Florence. The remaining funds will be used to help with unmet needs for individuals and families impacted by Hurricane Florence, as well as to support longer-term community-based recovery services.



Volunteers Pat Christopher and Francis Porter drove a Red Cross emergency response vehicle from Memphis, Tennessee, to Columbia, S.C., where it was loaded with supplies for communities devastated by Hurricane Florence. Photo by Bob Wallace/American Red Cross.



# YOUR HELP MADE A REAL DIFFERENCE

The extraordinary generosity of the public helped tens of thousands in need after Hurricane Florence.





## Hurricane Florence Expenses and Commitments (in millions)<sup>1</sup>

As of September 3, 2019 (\$69.4 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	\$8.6	\$0.1	\$4.6	\$15.9	\$29.2	51%
Deployment and maintenance of volunteers and staff (includes airfare, lodging, meals and vehicles)	\$9.1	\$0.9	\$0.2	\$0.1	\$10.3	18%
Freight, postage and warehousing	\$3.1	—	—	—	\$3.1	6%
Full-time Red Cross employees	\$1.7	\$0.1	\$0.3	\$0.4	\$2.5	4%
Kitchen, shelter and other logistics that enable service delivery	\$2.3	—	—	—	\$2.3	4%
IT, communications and call centers	\$0.9	—	\$0.9	\$0.3	\$2.1	4%
Long-term recovery grants to help meet unmet needs <sup>2</sup>	—	—	—	\$0.9	\$0.9	2%
Temporary disaster hires	\$0.3	—	\$0.1	\$0.4	\$0.8	1%
Equipment, maintenance and fueling of Red Cross emergency vehicles and rented trucks	\$0.7	—	—	—	\$0.7	1%
Total Program Expenses	\$26.7	\$1.1	\$6.1	\$18.0	\$51.9	91%
Management, general and fundraising <sup>3</sup>					\$5.1	9%
<b>Total Expenses</b>					<b>\$57.0</b>	<b>100%</b>
Program dollars remaining to be spent (includes grant funds awarded but not disbursed)					\$11.3	
Management, general and fundraising remaining to be applied					\$1.1	
<b>Total Budget</b>					<b>\$69.4</b>	

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

<sup>2</sup>\$3.2 million remaining to be disbursed on grants already signed. Does not include partner organizations' administrative costs related to the grant, which are approximately 1–3 percent of the awarded amount. These costs are reflected in the management, general and fundraising rows.

<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 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 Hurricane Florence will be spent on services to people affected by Hurricane Florence.

*Thank you!*

The Red Cross must be ready for every disaster, big or small, and we respond to an average of more than 62,000 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.



To learn more about Red Cross response and recovery efforts to help Hurricane Florence survivors, visit [redcross.org/florence](https://redcross.org/florence).



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