



# Hurricane Ian

SIX-MONTH UPDATE | APRIL 2023



**American  
Red Cross**

## Massive Response Aids Heartbroken Residents in Hurricane's Wake

Hurricane Ian — the third-costliest weather disaster on record — slammed ashore near Fort Myers, Florida, last fall with 150 mph gusts and a destructive storm surge that caused catastrophic damage to Florida's southwest coast.

Ian then tore a devastating swath through the center of the state, as torrential rains and high winds inundated communities, toppled trees and caused power outages from Orlando to Daytona Beach. Back over the Atlantic, Ian again strengthened and made a second landfall in South Carolina, inflicting more damage in the Carolinas and other southern states.

Even before Ian's landfall, thousands of trained American Red Cross disaster workers, truckloads of critical supplies and other resources were standing by to mount a massive response. With millions of impacted residents left reeling in Ian's aftermath, our dedicated volunteers and employees worked around the clock for weeks to provide safe shelter, relief and comfort for people forced to leave their homes.

When it was safe to do so, our teams fanned out to bring food and water to hard-hit neighborhoods and families that had chosen to ride out the storm at home. They also delivered essential cleanup supplies, like shovels, rakes, cleanup kits and trash bags, as well as basic health services, emotional support and spiritual care to heartbroken individuals and families.

This vital aid meant the world to people like North Fort Myers resident Rebecca Danners and her family. During the hurricane, a tornado ripped off the roof and back of their rented mobile home. Unable to find short-term housing near their jobs, the family lived for a time in a Red Cross shelter, where they received hot meals and food for their dog, as well as support from Red Cross caseworkers to help them plan for the future and make housing arrangements.



Cecilia Ramirez received Red Cross financial assistance to help her recover from Hurricane Ian. "I'm going to use the funds to buy food for my family and to see a doctor about my knee that was injured during the flood," she said. To learn more about our response and the people we've helped, please visit our Hurricane Ian story map at [redcross.org/hurricaneian](https://redcross.org/hurricaneian). Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

Above: Sebastian Wells lives with and helps care for his grandparents, who suffer from dementia. He was surprised when a Red Cross team showed up at their home to offer financial assistance in the wake of the storm. "I'm amazed the Red Cross came to our house to see if I needed help," Sebastian said. He plans to use the funds to repair the roof and help catch up on bills. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

Rebecca explained how much Red Cross assistance meant to her family. “We have no family here. We moved down here almost three years ago, and we wouldn’t have anywhere to go,” she said.

Six months after Ian’s life-changing impact, many individuals, families and communities are still struggling to recover from the damage caused to their homes and livelihoods. Powered by the compassionate commitment of generous donors, the Red Cross continues to stand by the sides of Ian survivors to identify and meet their most pressing needs. We have provided financial assistance to help people get back on their feet, ongoing guidance with recovery planning, help locating available community resources and much more as affected residents work to restore their lives and communities.

## Meeting Ongoing Recovery Needs in Hard-Hit Communities

Just weeks after Hurricane Ian’s catastrophic impact, the Red Cross delivered our first round of “immediate” financial assistance, which can help families replace lost clothing, buy food and gas, or meet other pressing needs in the early days after a disaster. To ensure that as many residents in need as possible received this critical aid, Red Cross teams — including Latino Engagement Teams that have experience working with Latino or Spanish-speaking communities — went door-to-door in heavily damaged neighborhoods.

In the months since Ian’s landfall, the Red Cross has also provided additional “bridge” financial assistance to some of the most severely affected residents — whose homes suffered major damage or were destroyed — helping them overcome significant recovery roadblocks and begin to rebuild their lives.



Weeks after Hurricane Ian devastated the west coast of Florida, Red Cross workers continued to meet with affected residents to provide ongoing support. Red Cross damage assessment teams have surveyed over 200,000 homes and invited families with major damage to Red Cross service centers to access immediate financial assistance. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

### Response at a Glance\*

Nearly **3,800 Red Cross disaster workers** mounted a massive response to help people impacted by Hurricane Ian. They have:



**1.7 million**

Served more than **1.7 million meals and snacks** with partners



**195,000**

Reached an estimated **195,000 people** with disaster relief and recovery services



**60,250**

Provided nearly **60,250 overnight shelter stays** with partners



**36,500**

Provided relief supplies to more than **36,500 households**

\*Cumulative figures in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia in response to Hurricane Ian as of March 28, 2023.



As of March 28, 2023, we had provided **relief and recovery financial assistance totaling approximately \$31.4 million**, reaching thousands of households devastated by Ian's winds and flooding. This financial assistance will allow people to make their own decisions and overcome the barriers standing in the way of their recovery, such as housing and transportation expenses, job-related needs, childcare, and accessing health and mental health services.

Along with financial assistance, Red Cross Shelter Resident Transition teams have provided extended casework support and follow-up services to shelter residents who were struggling to find suitable longer-term housing, whether due to lack of financial resources or other factors. These teams helped meet a critical need for many of the people we serve, as lack of available affordable housing in the aftermath of disasters can leave many vulnerable individuals and families who have lost homes or stable living situations with nowhere else to turn.

Supporting recovery from massive disasters like Hurricane Ian requires thoughtful collaboration with local partners and the impacted communities. Today, Red Cross volunteers and employees are working closely with nonprofit and civic organizations, local businesses and governments to care for communities and families through the recovery process. We will stand with Ian survivors through the year ahead and beyond, helping them plan their next steps and identify available recovery resources, as well as offering comfort, encouragement and guidance through this emotionally exhausting experience.

"Six months is an important milestone for disaster survivors," said Debi Meeds, Red Cross community recovery manager for Hurricane Ian in Florida. "People in the affected communities often feel like they've been forgotten, so it's important for us to be present and share what we're doing," she said. "Twenty-six counties in Florida had disaster declarations, and we are in every one of those counties."

In addition to providing households with financial assistance and one-on-one casework support, the Red Cross is collaborating with partner organizations with specialized expertise to help with community recovery. For example, we are planning grants to organizations offering disaster case management that help residents address their unmet recovery needs. As some needs and gaps are filled, new ones will rise to the top, and the Red Cross will help to convene and fund the ongoing work of unmet-needs committees across the affected counties.

In the weeks and months ahead, we will continue to work with these nonprofit partners, as well as local, state and federal government agencies, to focus on longer-term recovery needs in the affected communities. We will also fund work that can help residents become better prepared for and more resilient against future crises, such as home safety training that is focused on hurricane risks and long-term recovery funding for mental health partners.

"I've heard from many people how Red Cross long-term recovery support — for example, with our mental health partners — helped strengthen Florida after Hurricane Irma [in 2017]," Debi said. "It will have an impact well beyond the immediate disaster."



Red Cross volunteer Phil Bauer helps Veronica Gespo file a case to receive funds to help her recover from Hurricane Ian. During the recovery phase of disaster relief, Red Cross Latino Engagement Teams are combing neighborhoods to reach all communities affected by the disaster. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross



Barbara was able to find stable housing and other resources with help from the Red Cross Shelter Resident Transition team. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

## Recovery Assistance Helps Storm Survivors Get Back on Their Feet

Powered by the generosity of countless donors who gave to help people when their lives were turned upside down by Hurricane Ian, the Red Cross has provided financial assistance and more to help some of the hardest-hit residents get back on their feet.

### ‘This gives us hope.’ — Denate Tlanepantla

At a Red Cross service center for people impacted by Hurricane Ian in Fort Myers, Florida, Red Cross volunteer Rachel Brebaker assists Denate Tlanepantla and his family. The family, whose home suffered major damage in the storm, received Red Cross bridge financial assistance to help them rebuild their lives.



Denate Tlanepantla and his family received Red Cross financial assistance to help them repair their home after Ian struck. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

Denate explained that he plans to use the funds to purchase building material to repair their damaged home. “This gives us hope,” he said, “it keeps us going.”

### ‘You guys are like family to me.’ — Barbara

Barbara found herself in a Red Cross shelter when a series of setbacks, topped off by Hurricane Ian’s impacts, left her without a home. After staying in the shelter for several weeks while trying to find her way forward, Barbara was connected to the Red Cross Shelter Resident Transition (SRT) program. Through the program, she was able to secure housing and a car, which she uses to make a living as a delivery driver for companies like Door Dash.

Four months after Hurricane Ian, she was still in regular contact with her Red Cross SRT caseworker, who helped Barbara access a variety of community resources. Barbara was excited to finally move from a shelter to a home of her own, thanks again to support from the Red Cross.

“You guys are like family to me,” she said of the SRT team. “You’ve done what family typically tries to do. You made sure I wasn’t homeless for Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year’s. You made sure we were safe.”



## **‘It’s a real blessing.’ — Felicia Wynn**

Felicia Wynn of Arcadia, Florida, received a pre-loaded debit card containing financial assistance from the American Red Cross to repair damages to her home caused by Hurricane Ian.

“This will really help,” said the mother of four. “My husband and I are grateful; the hurricane put us behind on our bills, and this will help us catch up and also make some repairs to our home. It’s a real blessing.”



Felicia Wynn, of Arcadia, Florida, receives a pre-loaded debit card to help with pressing needs.

## **‘When a working man loses his tools, he’s lost everything.’ — Elnathan Woods**

Florida resident Elnathan Woods heeded the warning to evacuate in the face of Hurricane Ian, but when he returned a week later, the handyman who “can fix anything” discovered that the tools he needed for work had been submerged under three feet of water, and his house was nearly destroyed.

In the weeks that followed the hurricane, he helped with repairs to his 90-year-old aunt’s home, along with the house of a cousin. “You need to set priorities,” Elnathan said. “My house came later.”

By the time he got around to his own damaged home, the extent of the destruction had become clear to Elnathan — and he was out of money. He arrived at the Red Cross service center with little hope. “I won’t qualify,” he thought. Instead, he found a friend in Red Cross volunteer Aaron Holloway, who helped him apply for bridge financial assistance at our outreach center in Fort Myers. When he received a message that he had been approved and money was on its way, both Elnathan and Aaron let out whoops of joy.



Elnathan Woods and Red Cross volunteer Aaron Holloway. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

## **‘This financial assistance will make a big difference.’ — Rosalba Guerrero**

Rosalba Guerrero’s Arcadia, Florida, home was heavily damaged during Hurricane Ian’s onslaught. When Red Cross volunteers Christine Newton and Coleen Kulkin first called — and then showed up at her door to offer immediate Red Cross financial assistance — she began to cry.

Rosalba explained that, as the mother of five children, it is nearly impossible to stretch the family income to cover groceries, much less purchase building supplies.

“I’m going to use this money to buy food,” she said. “That will help us devote more of our income to putting our house back together. My dad gave us this house — it used to be where I came to visit him,” Rosalba added. “I want to fix it back up like it used to be. This financial assistance will make a big difference.”



Rosalba Guerrero meets with Red Cross volunteers Christine and Coleen outside her hurricane-damaged home. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

## Generous Donors Power Hurricane Ian Response

Thanks to compassionate donors, the Red Cross has raised \$96.3 million designated for our Hurricane Ian response and recovery—including the value of critical donated goods and services—to help people affected by this disaster. As of March 28, 2023, the Red Cross had already spent or made commitments to spend approximately \$83.4 million on emergency relief and recovery efforts for Hurricane Ian. We will continue to program the remaining funds to provide and support services for both individual and community long-term recovery in the impacted region.

### Hurricane Ian Expenses and Commitments<sup>1,2</sup> (in millions)

as of March 28, 2023

| Expense Categories                                                                   | Food, Shelter and Relief Items | Health and Emotional Support | Financial Assistance | Community Recovery & Resilience | Total         | Expense %   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Financial assistance, food and other relief items                                    | \$9.4                          | \$1.2                        | \$31.4               | —                               | \$42.0        | 50%         |
| Deployment of volunteers and staff (includes airfare, lodging, meals and vehicles)   | \$7.0                          | \$1.1                        | \$7.0                | —                               | \$15.1        | 18%         |
| Freight, postage and warehousing                                                     | \$4.5                          | —                            | —                    | —                               | \$4.5         | 5%          |
| Full-time Red Cross employees                                                        | \$2.8                          | \$0.1                        | \$0.9                | —                               | \$3.8         | 5%          |
| Kitchen, shelter and other logistics that enable service delivery                    | \$2.5                          | \$0.7                        | \$0.5                | —                               | \$3.7         | 4%          |
| IT, communications and call centers                                                  | \$2.1                          | \$0.5                        | \$0.1                | —                               | \$3.6         | 4%          |
| Equipment, maintenance and fueling of Red Cross emergency vehicles and rented trucks | \$1.5                          | —                            | —                    | —                               | \$1.5         | 2%          |
| Temporary disaster hires                                                             | \$0.4                          | \$0.3                        | \$0.2                | —                               | \$0.9         | 1%          |
| <b>Total Program Expenses</b>                                                        | <b>\$30.2</b>                  | <b>\$3.9</b>                 | <b>\$41.0</b>        | <b>—</b>                        | <b>\$75.1</b> | <b>90%</b>  |
| Management, general and fundraising <sup>3</sup>                                     |                                |                              |                      |                                 | \$8.3         | 10%         |
| <b>Total Spent and Committed</b>                                                     |                                |                              |                      |                                 | <b>\$83.4</b> | <b>100%</b> |
| Program Dollars Remaining                                                            |                                |                              |                      |                                 | \$11.6        |             |
| Management, general and fundraising remaining to be applied                          |                                |                              |                      |                                 | \$1.3         |             |
| <b>Total Budget</b>                                                                  |                                |                              |                      |                                 | <b>\$96.3</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>Includes Hurricane Ian responses in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia.

<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 17,000 employees and nearly 300,000 volunteers, fundraising and communications functions, and other support services across all program lines. Ninety cents of every dollar spent for Hurricane Ian will support delivering care and comfort to help people affected by this storm.





Red Cross recovery efforts sometimes just involve a great big hug. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

*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 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.