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FACTS AT A GLANCE: American Red Cross Response to Hurricane Katrina

Regularly Updated Fact Sheet for the Media

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WASHINGTON, Monday, September 05, 2005 — The American Red Cross has launched an immense emergency relief effort to meet unprecedented humanitarian needs in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

In times of disaster, the American Red Cross immediately mobilizes workers and supplies to address the urgent, critical needs of disaster victims, which include providing emergency shelter, food, water, counseling and other assistance. The Red Cross response to Hurricane Katrina is the largest response to a single, natural disaster in the 125-year history of the organization.

PHOTOGRAPHS

[View American Red Cross photos](#) from Mississippi and the Houston Astrodome.

Fast Facts (As of 5:00 p.m., Sept 4)

- *Red Cross Mass Care:*
 - Evacuees – More than 135,500 evacuees are being sheltered by the American Red Cross.
 - Shelters – More than 470 Red Cross shelters are open in 12 states: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas, Tennessee and Utah, with many more on standby. The Red Cross also is coordinating with other agencies, the mass sheltering operation at the Houston Astrodome, and is working with local partners to find additional facilities in which thousands of evacuees will find a safe, clean and comfortable environment..
 - Emergency Vehicles – 249 Red Cross Emergency Response Vehicles (ERVs) are now in Louisiana, Mississippi and Alabama, with additional ERVs en route to the affected area. The Red Cross is working to engage additional vehicles for food distribution to survivors.
 - Relief Workers – Thousands of Red Cross staff and volunteers across the country and

from every part of the organization are working around the clock to serve the public need. More than 5,000 Red Crossers have left their families to serve in affected areas already, and the Red Cross is moving more than 600 additional workers into affected areas every day.

- Feeding – The Red Cross is working closely with several partners, including the Southern Baptist Convention, the Adventists and Second Harvest to provide emergency food to survivors and responders. In coordination with the Southern Baptists, preparations are underway to serve nearly 500,000 hot meals each day.

More than 2.6 million meals and more than 3.3 million snacks have been served to survivors of Hurricane Katrina to-date.

- Health & Preventative Care – The Red Cross is working with government and health services partners to develop health strategies and preventative measures to help the public and relief workers cope with the serious public health emergency. For additional information, visit www.redcross.org or www.cdc.gov.

Note: Media is encouraged to contact their [local Red Cross chapter](#) to learn how it is responding to the disaster.

- *Reuniting Families:*

The Red Cross, with support of the worldwide Red Cross Movement, has launched a Web site and hotline to help reunite loved ones.

- Online – Persons looking for loved ones can go to www.redcross.org and [click on "Family Links Registry"](#) to register yourself, a missing relative or view the existing list of registrants.
- Registered – To date, more than 44,000 people have registered on the "Family Links" Web site.
- Hotline – Those who do not have Internet access should [call toll-free 1-877-LOVED-1S \(1-877-568-3317\)](#).

- *How to Help:*

Due to the generosity of the American people, the American Red Cross stands ready to meet the monumental challenge of helping to rebuild lives.

- Funds Received to Date – The Red Cross estimates that, as of Sept. 4, 2005, it has received \$352 million in gifts and pledges for the hurricane relief effort.
- To Donate – Call 1-800-HELP NOW or 1-800-257-7575 (Spanish). Contributions to the Disaster Relief Fund may be sent to your local American Red Cross chapter or to the American Red Cross, P. O. Box 37243, Washington, DC 20013. Internet users can [make a secure online contribution by visiting www.redcross.org](#).

The Red Cross is [unable to accept small, individual donations](#) or collections of items such as clothing, food or cleaning supplies. The best way to help is by making a financial contribution and [collaboration is key](#) to meeting the needs of the survivors of this catastrophic disaster.

- To Volunteer – Individuals interested in volunteering for the American Red Cross should [contact their local Red Cross chapter](#). Well-meaning volunteers are being urged not to report directly to the affected areas but should coordinate their efforts with responding organizations.
- To Learn More – The magnitude of this disaster is bringing together the experience, expertise and resources of many organizations and agencies to meet the

unprecedented humanitarian needs of the hurricane survivors. To learn more about the coordination of efforts and additional resources, visit www.usafreedomcorps.gov.

- ***Get Prepared:*** It is now more important than ever that the public take steps to prepare themselves, their families, communities and workplaces for emergencies and disasters. The Red Cross responds to more than 70,000 disasters annually, including wildfires, tornadoes and single family house fires, with some type of disaster striking every 8 minutes in the United States. Make a plan, build a kit, and get trained in first aid and CPR.

Important Notes

- ***Disaster Assistance:*** All American Red Cross disaster assistance is free, made possible by voluntary donations of time and money from the American people. You can help the victims of this disaster and thousands of other disasters across the country each year by making a financial gift to the American Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund, which enables the Red Cross to provide shelter, food, counseling and other assistance to those in need.
- ***Situation Updates:*** This disaster relief operation is constantly changing. The Red Cross will update this document as often as feasible, but please note the date of last update when using facts or numbers in news stories.
- ***Shelter Numbers:*** Shelter numbers fluctuate based on their location and the time of day.
- ***Evacuees:*** The Red Cross views the individuals and families it is helping as people who are evacuees from their homes. The term “refugees” implies they have been forced to cross international boundaries to avoid conflict.
- ***Red Cross Mission:*** The American Red Cross, a humanitarian organization led by volunteers and guided by its Congressional Charter and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Movement, will provide relief to victims of disaster and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.
- ***About the American Red Cross:*** The American Red Cross is where people mobilize to help their neighbors—across the street, across the country, and across the world—in emergencies. Each year, in communities large and small, victims of some 70,000 disasters turn to neighbors familiar and new—the nearly one million volunteers and 35,000 employees of the Red Cross. Through almost 900 locally supported chapters, more than 15 million people gain the skills they need to prepare for and respond to emergencies in their homes, communities and world. Some four million people give blood—the gift of life—through the Red Cross, making it the largest supplier of blood and blood products in the United States. And the Red Cross helps thousands of U.S. service members separated from their families by military duty stay connected. As part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, a global network of 181 national societies, the Red Cross helps restore hope and dignity to the world's most vulnerable people. An average of 91 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs. The Red Cross is not a government agency; it relies on donations of time, money, and blood to do its work. Marsha J. Evans is the President and CEO of the American Red Cross.



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