

# COLORADO FLOODS

ONE-YEAR UPDATE | SEPTEMBER 2014



**American  
Red Cross**

## A Swift Response

When more than six months' worth of rain fell in Colorado over a three-day period in September 2013, flash floods swept away homes and neighborhoods. In Boulder, the rainfall was so heavy that the storm qualified as a once-in-a-1,000-year flood event. While the rains were still coming down, the American Red Cross sprang into action, providing safe havens and meals for thousands of evacuees as floodwaters advanced eastward across the state.

Compassionate donors powered our swift response, which included Red Cross workers from Colorado and around the nation distributing relief items and offering physical and emotional support to survivors. The Red Cross set up 10 emergency aid stations, providing nurses, counselors, caseworkers and relief supplies in flood-ravaged areas, and dedicated volunteers hiked into isolated communities to find out what people needed and to deliver aid.

Our strong roots in Colorado communities helped the Red Cross identify the best ways to deliver relief where it's needed most. For example, in Greeley, our community partnership team worked with a local priest to connect parishioners with relief items and other resources. The church helped get the word out during several masses, while a teacher and members of the local high school Spanish class helped interpret during distribution of relief supplies. Soon, even more parishioners pitched in to help their neighbors. Together, the Red Cross and its partners reached many more people in need by collaborating with trusted community members.



A Red Cross volunteer holds Gabino, 2, at a Red Cross shelter in Greeley.

### Services Delivered



Activated 25 response vehicles



Provided more than 5,200 overnight stays



Distributed nearly 250,000 relief items



Provided more than 15,000 health and mental health contacts



Served nearly 205,000 meals and snacks



Mobilized more than 1,300 workers and volunteers

All numbers are cumulative and represent Red Cross response efforts since September 12, 2013.

Hector Emanuel/American Red Cross

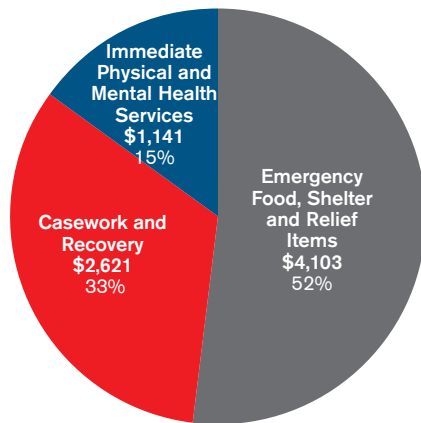
## Donations Are Helping Coloradans

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, the Red Cross has been able to assist survivors and local community groups without pause over the past year. As of August 14, the Red Cross has spent or made commitments to spend nearly \$7.9 million for Colorado emergency relief and recovery efforts. This is 97 percent

of our \$8.1 million in donations for the Colorado floods. The Red Cross is committed to spending all designated flood donations to help with flood response and recovery, and we will be responsive to the evolving needs of Coloradans as we spend the remaining dollars.

### Colorado Floods Expenses and Commitments\*

Through August 14, 2014  
 Nearly \$7.9M (of \$8.1M raised)  
 (in thousands)



\*An average of 91 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs.

#### Emergency Food, Shelter and Relief Items

We open shelters to provide safe refuge, serve meals to residents and first responders, and hand out relief items such as cleaning supplies, shovels and toothbrushes. We also maintain warehouses, a technological infrastructure and response vehicles to provide relief where it's needed most.

#### Casework and Recovery

We help people get back on their feet by supporting both immediate and longer-term recovery needs, including casework management, clothing, housing, transportation and other assistance. We also provide support to partner organizations assisting with recovery initiatives, including community rebuilding projects. This includes other activities that help communities meet disaster-caused needs. In addition, we help communities plan and prepare for disasters, as well as make sure we're ready to respond to the next event. This includes preparedness training and community readiness activities.

#### Immediate Physical and Mental Health Services

We care for the basic health needs and emotional well-being of disaster survivors. This includes first aid support, replacing prescription medicines or eyeglasses, and helping people to cope.

## Helping Individuals and Families

Trained Red Cross volunteers are working one-on-one with individuals and families who need extra help getting back on their feet, and we are also coordinating with community partners to support longer-term recovery and preparedness efforts.

Red Cross caseworkers have offered ongoing support to residents affected by the floods—listening to their needs and assisting with expenses like mold remediation, furniture replacement, water tanks so they can have clean water, and fuel costs incurred by rerouting travel due to damaged roads.

We have also supported flood recovery through our Coordinated Assistance Network, a client case management tool we are sharing with partners so that multiple agencies can collaborate on delivering services to those impacted by the floods. This database allows recovery agencies to open and track cases for families and help ensure their needs are met.

## Nuñez Family Starts Over, With Help From the Red Cross

When flash floods struck Longmont last September, Alma Nuñez and her family were awakened by a 3 a.m. call warning them of approaching floodwaters. Alma, her husband Guillermo, daughter Perla, son-in-law Gerardo, and granddaughters Yamileth and Yaretzi left everything they owned behind as they escaped to Guillermo's sister's home.

The home was crowded and the family needed help. "We would go to the Red Cross shelter for meals and to spend the day, and then just stay at my sister-in-law's house to sleep," Alma said. Red Cross volunteer nurses helped Alma refill her family's medications and provided a replacement breathing machine—essential to preventing seizures caused by her sleep apnea.

When the family returned to their home a week later, they found water had flooded the mobile home up to the ceiling. "Almost everything that we had inside the trailer was thrown out—the only things we saved were two beds, some photos and some children's clothes. Everything was wet," Alma said. "One of our neighbors found a big fish on his stairs because the water passed that high."

As the Nuñez family tried to salvage what they could, a Red Cross volunteer visited, gave them cleanup supplies, inquired about their needs and took down their names for casework follow-up. Later, a long-term recovery caseworker reconnected them with the Red Cross—just in time. Guillermo had injured his hand and was unable to work; and while daughter Perla had found an apartment for her family with help from FEMA, Alma had struggled to find an apartment she and Guillermo could afford.

"All the apartments were full and there were wait lists," Alma explained. "The Red Cross gave us one month of rent, which helped me a lot because my husband couldn't work." The rental assistance helped them secure a small, tidy manufactured home rental in Longmont, where they have been living since.

Nearly a year after the floods, Alma and Perla are still fighting to get back to normal. "It has affected every one of us, each one," Alma said. "Sometimes there just aren't words to describe it."

"It's like starting from the beginning," Perla explained.

Perla (left), daughters Yamileth and Yaretzi, and Alma in a new rental home.



Patricia Billinger/American Red Cross



## Investing in Local Solutions

At the same time that the Red Cross is helping individuals and families recover, we also are working with community partners like the InterMountain Alliance to help flood-affected towns and neighborhoods come back stronger and more resilient. We have provided funding and supplies for a wide variety of local projects that both meet today’s needs and also prepare residents to better withstand future emergencies and recover more quickly afterwards—particularly in areas that may become cut off during disasters.

“The role of the Red Cross in disaster recovery is intensely collaborative. We trust locals’ knowledge. They’re not asking us to do the work for them; they just want the information and the tools to do the job.”

—Sabrina Amon, Recovery Manager, Red Cross of Colorado

For example, in Glen Haven, the Red Cross funded a Southern Baptist project to construct a bridge that gave access to properties cut off by damaged or destroyed infrastructure. The bridge allows volunteer groups to reach previously inaccessible properties and allows community members to take ownership over their own projects by providing them with a way to cross the river at otherwise impassable points. We’ve also helped flood-affected residents by funding fuel and maintenance for heavy machinery that cleared debris and helped rebuild roads and bridges.

In addition, the Red Cross has provided equipment and tools to help volunteers with cleanup projects in Estes Park, Lyons, Berthoud and several other towns, and we helped pay waste disposal fees for flood debris in Larimer



Volunteer Alison Shaffer (left) of Eaton, Colo., and Michelle Diamond of Rochester, Mich., surveyed the damage to homes in Evans.

County. We partnered with the 4-Mile Store and Christian Disaster Relief Volunteers in Lyons to build temporary office space where long-term recovery case managers can meet privately with people from the community who need assistance.

Along with support for recovery and rebuilding projects, strengthening community resilience and emergency preparedness has been a key priority for the Red Cross in isolated mountain communities, like those in Boulder County.

In these rural communities, where electricity, landlines and cell phones can be unreliable during disasters, receiving alerts about threatening weather conditions is essential. Residents need to be able to tune in to information that will help them decide whether to evacuate or shelter in place, as well as where to go—and when.

To help with this effort, the Red Cross used donated funds to pay for all-weather radios to support flood-affected communities. These radios will enable remote mountain communities to receive real-time alerts regarding weather, fire, floods and evacuation orders, providing timely warnings that can make the difference between life and death in disaster scenarios.

## Thank You

The generous support the Red Cross received following the floods in Colorado has allowed us to deliver a sustained response, as well as support the longer-term recovery and preparedness needs of affected communities.

The Red Cross responds to nearly 70,000 disasters of all sizes every year, ranging from home fires to hurricanes, wildfires and floods. The remarkable generosity of our supporters—individuals, corporations and foundations—drives our ability to react and provide relief. We are grateful for your trust.