



**American
Red Cross**

Coronavirus Outbreak (COVID-19) **ONE-YEAR UPDATE**

May 2021



A Letter from Gail McGovern, President and CEO, American Red Cross



In March 2020, our lives changed as the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the country and around the world. As I look back on an incredibly difficult year, I'm saddened by the heartbreaking losses so many have endured. Yet I'm also deeply heartened by the heroic efforts of those who stepped up to make a lifechanging difference for people in need.

In the face of numerous challenges, the dedicated volunteers, employees and supporters of the American Red Cross have continued to bring our humanitarian mission to life, every day. Amid the difficult circumstances and frightening unknowns of a deadly pandemic, thousands of Red Crossers came together to do what they've always done—provide help and hope for people who count on us in times of crisis.

Our Biomedical Services team members collected and delivered lifesaving blood and blood products for cancer patients, accident victims and others with critical medical needs, despite unpredictable demand and thousands of canceled blood drives. We developed new safety protocols to protect the health of our blood donors and workers, and we worked diligently to identify new venues for collecting blood and innovative ways to improve productivity for patients counting on us.

We also faced one of the worst disaster years on record—with historic wildfires and back-to-back hurricanes, destructive tornadoes and thousands of daily emergencies like home fires. Tireless Red Cross disaster response teams provided close to 1.5 million overnight stays in hotels to families suffering in the wake of these disasters—offering food, comfort and hope to people in their darkest hours.

The Red Cross also carried forward our critical work in handling emergency calls and providing support services for our nation's military members, veterans and their families. We continued to help our sister Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies around the globe with preparedness and disease prevention training—including efforts to help stop the spread of COVID-19. And our Training Services group quickly adapted to train people in a virtual environment.

As always, all this vital work was made possible by the generosity of our donors and volunteers, whose compassionate service lies at the heart of everything we do. In a year when so many things seemed to change overnight, your commitment was one constant the Red Cross could continue to rely on.

On behalf of those we serve, thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gail McGovern".

Gail McGovern



Red Cross phlebotomist April Hall works with whole blood donor Stephen Futado. Photo by Dennis Drenner/American Red Cross

Continuing Our Lifesaving Mission Through a Challenging Year

The COVID-19 pandemic presented extraordinary challenges to people and organizations across the country, and the American Red Cross was no different. Pausing our essential mission to serve people in need was not an option, so in March 2020, we began implementing plans to keep delivering our vital blood and disaster relief services whenever and wherever they were needed, while also keeping our workers and those they serve as safe as possible from the threat of this deadly virus.

Generous donors to the Red Cross once again stepped up, helping us make critical investments

to ensure the safety of our dedicated workers who supply life-sustaining blood to hospitals across the U.S., raise awareness about the ongoing need for blood donations during the pandemic, and adapt the ways we respond to disasters and care for survivors.

Our dedicated volunteers and employees responded with creativity and determination—while also coping with the effects of this coronavirus outbreak on their own lives and families. They helped ensure that the urgent needs of people who count on the Red Cross in times of crisis would not go unmet.

Ensuring a Sufficient Blood Supply to Meet Hospital Needs

On a typical day, Red Cross workers collect about 12,500 blood donations and more than 2,700 platelet donations, but in this trying year, a typical day was hard to define. Through tens of thousands of canceled blood drives that caused early shortages, as well as fluctuations in the demand for blood due to the COVID-19 pandemic's evolving impact, Red Cross phlebotomists and other Blood Services staff members continued their daily work to collect, process and deliver about 40% of the nation's blood supply.

From the outset of this coronavirus outbreak, we made plans to support and sustain our Blood Services staff and rally volunteer blood donors to meet the transfusion needs of mothers giving birth, patients with sickle cell disease, accident victims and countless others who depend on us for lifesaving blood.

The Red Cross moved quickly to ensure that our blood drives and donation centers had appropriate safety protocols in place for donors and staff. Donated funds helped us purchase supplies and equipment needed to continue our blood collections during this public health emergency, including infrared thermometers for temperature checks to screen all those that entered our drives, personal protective equipment (PPE) like masks and gloves for our staff, as well as hand sanitizer, disinfectant and supplies needed to support enhanced cleaning measures at blood drives and donation centers.



A Red Cross phlebotomist and donor celebrate a successful donation at a public blood drive in Portsmouth, Virginia, November 2020. Photo by Jared Beasley/American Red Cross

Mitigating the Pandemic's Impact on Blood Collections

Early in the pandemic, an unprecedented number of blood drives were canceled, leading to a severe blood shortage nationwide. To ensure blood products were readily available for patients in need, the Red Cross launched a public awareness campaign with generous financial and in-kind support.

Working to Maintain a Sufficient Blood Supply

Even with unprecedented cancellations, mitigation efforts and your support helped us significantly offset lost collections:



Increased performance: **Over 418,000 units** were collected from additional donors presenting at retained drives.



New drives added: **Over 388,000 units** were collected from additional drives added at short notice.



Reduced lost donations: Thanks to mitigation measures, the Red Cross has reduced our net loss of blood collections by approximately **43% to date**.

Figures reflect American Red Cross efforts from March 10, 2020–March 10, 2021.

Across the U.S., thousands of blood donors heard this call and stepped up to help their neighbors by scheduling blood donation appointments—helping alleviate this initial shortfall.

As the months wore on during the pandemic, the Red Cross continued to face blood drive cancellations, resulting in the loss of more than 1.9 million blood donations. Due to Red Cross mitigation efforts and selfless volunteer blood donors, we were still able to meet the needs of hospital patients requiring transfusions.

With new blood drives added at short notice and increased productivity at retained blood drives, the Red Cross has collected more than 754,000 additional donations over the first year of our coronavirus outbreak designation. These efforts helped the Red Cross collect more than 4.5 million blood donations—meeting our goal for the period.

Supporting Our Blood Collections Staff

Like many this past year, some Red Cross blood collections staff members were also hurting during the COVID-19 pandemic. We made investments to ensure we had sufficient workers to carry out our blood services mission—hiring new phlebotomists as needed to expand capacity and staff new blood drives as well as backfilling vacant positions. We also instituted a pay provision program to provide additional support to Blood Services employees who needed to take time away from work due to exposure quarantines or a COVID-19 diagnosis.

From October 2020–March 2021, the Red Cross experienced increased hospital demand for blood products. During this winter surge of COVID-19 infections, we were able to maintain strong blood inventory levels and provide sufficient products for hospitals and their patients—results that would not have been possible without these key investments in our collections staff at blood drives and donation centers.



As part of Red Cross COVID-19 protocols for emergency lodgings, volunteer nurse Cheryl Thomas checks Liemar Clark's temperature while his wife Peggy looks on. The couple sought shelter following an April 2020 tornado that struck Onalaska, Texas. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross



A Team Effort: Adapting to the Challenges of COVID-19

Anna Kelley, who works with the blood donor recruitment team in the Kansas and Oklahoma Region, saw firsthand how the COVID-19 pandemic affected Red Cross Blood Services staff members, and the importance of the investments made in PPE, mitigation of lost donations and additional staff support.

“Many of us experienced the double whammy with our personal lives and work lives disrupted and abruptly changed due to COVID-19,” Anna said, “but I watched our organization quickly adapt, change and power through.”

From the collections team “fighting on the front lines of COVID-19,” to administrative, marketing and donor recruitment staff members—and of course our selfless volunteer blood donors who make it all possible—Anna was awestruck by the team effort that helped sustain the mission. “Together, we all helped save lives in 2020!” she said.



Red Cross worker Michele Grady hands out meals at a drive-thru distribution point for families affected by Hurricane Laura in Lake Charles, Louisiana. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

Responding to Ceaseless Disasters Amid a Pandemic

In addition to the constant need for blood, people all over the country rely on the Red Cross to provide support in the wake of disasters, and that need remained constant over the past year. Through seemingly ceaseless crises—from spring tornadoes and floods to multiple destructive hurricanes and a record-breaking wildfire season—our disaster workers offered relief and comfort to families struggling to rebuild their lives while coping with additional obstacles and uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to these larger-scale disasters, Red Cross volunteers and employees were on hand to help people after emergencies like home fires that, while not making national headlines, still cause incredible hardship for affected families. Following crises big and small, we stood with people in their darkest hours, providing food, shelter, relief items including cleanup supplies, basic health services, and emotional support. We also offered many hard-hit survivors financial assistance to help them find lodging for the night, pay for groceries and clothing, and meet other urgent needs.

“In 2020, a major disaster struck about every 14 days, nearly quadruple the rate of a decade ago—all amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Working closely with community and government partners, the Red Cross delivered unprecedented levels of service with our COVID-19 protocols in place. We expect another significant year of disaster response in 2021, and trends indicate this could be our new norm. We also expect pandemic protocols to continue through the beginning of 2022.

Our readiness to respond and adapt to changing circumstances has never been more important. As more disasters strike more people more often, the Red Cross must be ready to address unique disaster-caused needs, respond to multiple major disasters simultaneously, maintain elevated response levels longer, and mobilize people and communities to speed our response times.”

Brad Kieserman, Vice President, Disaster Operations and Logistics



Volunteer Audrey Nguyen speaks with Anthony Ray Zachary at a Red Cross shelter in Houston, Texas. Anthony was among the millions of Texans left without power and water by a severe winter storm in February 2021. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

To help ensure the safety of our disaster operations during this ongoing pandemic, the Red Cross purchased essential supplies, including gloves, gowns, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, thermometers, face shields and goggles, and distributed them to all 50 Red Cross regions across the country for use by people affected by disasters and our disaster relief and recovery workforce.

We also adapted to deliver disaster relief services virtually where possible, necessitating additional investments in IT equipment like mobile phones and laptops, and we worked with government, business and community partners to offer displaced families safe refuge. We provided nearly 1.5 million overnight shelter and hotel stays for disaster survivors, and—when necessary for larger emergencies—we opened congregate shelters with appropriate social distancing and safety measures to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Over the first year of our service delivery during COVID-19, more than 11,000 Red Cross disaster workers were deployed (on the ground or virtually) nearly 24,500 times, with many responders deploying more than once. They helped provide vital aid to hundreds of thousands of people affected by disasters across the U.S.—and they were equipped to safely provide these essential services amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic thanks to generous support from our donors.

Recently, Red Cross disaster workers provided shelter, water, comfort kits and food to communities in Texas after a severe winter storm left thousands of residents without power in below freezing temperatures in late February 2021. Like many Texans, Red Cross volunteer Tawanda Womack was without power or water. As a disaster action team member, she responds to local disasters each week and is no stranger to helping her community when they need it most.

In February, that meant charging her devices in the car so she could continue her effort to connect with families suffering the effects of this devastating storm. She worked by flashlight to ensure that, even during the dark cold nights, she could support home fire survivors. Her courageous and selfless actions exemplify the tremendous spirit of Red Cross volunteers, who stand at the heart of everything we do.

Providing Additional Support

In addition to our more typical disaster response work,



Red Cross worker Tom Bernal conducts damage assessments in Onalaska, Texas, following a powerful tornado that struck the community in April 2020. Photo by Scott Dalton/American Red Cross

the Red Cross has also been providing support when requested at some mass COVID-19 vaccination sites around the U.S. For example, in Park County, Colorado, Red Cross volunteers welcomed people at the parking lot, helped with registration and passed out snacks in the recovery area at a local event where some 500 older adults were given COVID-19 vaccinations.

Last year, the Red Cross also launched a Virtual Family Assistance Center (VFAC), which was originally set up to provide support and information to families who have lost a loved one due to COVID-19. However, the hardships that are being experienced by communities across the country have led many people to contact us who have not had a death in the family, but are experiencing difficulties coping with the many challenges of the ongoing pandemic.

Red Crossers like Danel Lipparelli, a behavioral health volunteer from Nevada, stepped up to help provide free and confidential support for bereaved and grieving families across the country. Those conversations can



Thanks to generous blood and financial donors, Red Cross phlebotomists were able to continue collecting lifesaving blood for patients in need during the COVID-19 pandemic. Photo by Jared Beasley/American Red Cross

involve anything from making calls to coroners and funeral homes to connecting callers with local resources and partners to help families facing multiple losses.

“We’ve been running 11-hour shifts every day since last March,” Danel said. “Once callers talk with one of

our spiritual care, behavioral health or health services volunteers, that volunteer stays with the caller for all of the follow-up sessions. We want to hold people close as they go through the process.”

Generous Donors Power our Lifesaving Mission

Thanks to our compassionate donors, the American Red Cross raised \$105.8 million over the past year, including the value of critical donated goods and services, to continue delivering its lifesaving mission nationwide due to this public health emergency.

As of March 10, 2021, we had spent approximately \$105.8 million—the entirety of this generous funding—to support the safe delivery of blood and disaster relief services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the expanding availability of safe and effective vaccines offers new hope, the COVID-19 pandemic

is not over. The Red Cross will continue working to ensure the health and safety of our blood collection employees, volunteers and donors to maintain our collection capacity and meet increases in demand.

For as long as needed, we will also continue our work to safely support and shelter people displaced by disasters, either in available hotel space or, when necessary and in coordination with local government officials, in congregate shelters with appropriate PPE and enhanced safety, social distancing and cleaning protocols.

Coronavirus Outbreak (COVID-19) Expenses and Commitments (in millions)

as of March 10, 2021. (\$105.8 million raised)

Expense Categories	Total	Expense %
Implement public awareness and targeted outreach campaign to increase blood donations In-kind donations of paid advertising, paid search, special offers for donors, augmented donor recruitment workers	\$34.8	33%
Ensure availability of frontline workers to safely collect and manufacture blood Retain workers and backfill expected vacancies; expand capacity where needed	\$25.5	24%
Provide resources to safely collect blood Provide supplies and equipment in line with safety protocols; includes thermometers, masks, gloves and handheld equipment at blood drives	\$12.1	11%
Total Biomedical Services Expenses	\$72.4	68%
Provide a safe environment for people affected by disasters and disaster workers Handwashing stations, critical hygiene items, enhanced cleaning, accommodations in line with social distancing guidelines	\$17.0	16%
Work with community partners as requested to provide supplies and meals Cots, blankets, comfort kits, meals	\$4.9	5%
Create increased capability for disaster service delivery Virtual assistance workers, provision of laptops and additional IT equipment	\$0.9	1%
Total Disaster Services Expenses	\$22.8	22%
Total Program Expenses	\$95.2	90%
Management, general and fundraising ¹	\$10.6	10%
Total Budget	\$105.8	100%

¹Management, 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 capabilities, HR and payroll systems for approximately 18,500 employees and more than 300,000 volunteers, fundraising and communications functions, and other support services across all program lines. 90 cents of every dollar received for the Coronavirus Outbreak will be spent to enable continued delivery of our blood and disaster relief services due to this public health emergency.

Thank you!

In this challenging time for people across the country, those in need turn to the Red Cross for vital support when help can't wait. Your donation helps us fulfill this promise. The Red Cross is deeply grateful for the remarkable commitment of our donors, which has already made a meaningful impact for those we serve, and will continue to enable vital services as we carry out our lifesaving mission amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.