



**American  
Red Cross**

# Hurricane Maria

One-Year Update | September 2018





More than **12.8 million** meals and snacks served with partners



More than **5.2 million** relief items distributed



More than **77,000** water purification filters distributed



More than **40,800** health and mental health contacts made



More than **2,700** generators provided for people with medical equipment needs

—All numbers are cumulative and reflect Red Cross response efforts since September 20, 2017.



The third devastating storm to strike the U.S. in less than a month, **Maria was the most intense hurricane to hit Puerto Rico in more than 80 years**, causing devastating losses for residents and massive damage to key infrastructure across the island.

Hundreds of American Red Cross disaster workers from across the U.S. responded to help hurricane survivors in Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Powered by the generosity of our donors, they provided food, relief items, comfort and other critical support for families that often had nowhere else to turn.

Cover Photo: In July 2018, Red Cross workers deliver a new generator to Gina Cuevas Maldonado, a Hodgkin's lymphoma cancer patient and mother of two in Utuado, Puerto Rico. Many residents still lacked electrical power nearly a year after the storm. Photo by Isaac León/American Red Cross

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

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In September 2017, Hurricane Maria brought devastation and loss to people in Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and across the Caribbean. With two massive hurricane responses already underway, American Red Cross volunteers and employees stepped up once again to help survivors facing the most difficult of circumstances.

When I visited Puerto Rico following Hurricane Maria, I was truly heartbroken by the extent of the damage. Power was still out in San Juan and other places across the island, and many areas were extremely difficult to reach because of the damage to roads and infrastructure.

Despite the destruction I witnessed, I was deeply inspired by the resilience and fortitude of the people I met, including the incredible volunteers who worked tirelessly in challenging conditions—serving millions of meals and snacks, and delivering bottled water, bulk food supplies and cooking equipment so people could prepare meals for their families.

Using the donor-supported RC View system, the Red Cross identified areas with the most pressing needs across the island and provided sorely needed relief supplies, such as water filters for residents who lacked safe drinking water, tarps to cover damaged roofs, and comfort kits that included everyday necessities. We also helped reconnect thousands of people with loved ones using mobile satellite technology—allowing them to answer the most fundamental and important question: “Is my family okay?”

These vital efforts were strengthened by a multitude of spontaneous local volunteers, including amazing college students from local universities who were eager to help. With a pressing need for Spanish-speaking volunteers, we also benefitted from the remarkable support of sister Red Cross societies around the world.

Over the past year, the Red Cross has continued to stand with Maria survivors, providing relief supplies and support for urgent needs—such as generators to power life-sustaining medical equipment for families who still lack electricity. We’re also funding vital recovery programs that will strengthen vulnerable communities, helping them become more resilient against future crises.

The Red Cross and our partners are working to ensure these communities have consistent access to power and water in emergencies by installing solar power sources for schools and wells, supporting community health initiatives and preparedness training, and aiding the recovery of local economies through programs like micro-grants to small farmers and skills training in agriculture.

None of this work would be possible without the extraordinary generosity of our supporters and so many compassionate individuals who put their lives on hold to provide relief, comfort and hope when it was needed most. Thanks to you, the Red Cross continues to make a real difference in the lives of impacted residents who lost so much to Maria. I am profoundly grateful for your partnership and your trust in our humanitarian mission.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gail McGovern". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Gail McGovern

## In Maria's Wake, Red Cross Aid Meets Urgent Needs

One year ago, Hurricane Maria became the third major hurricane to impact the U.S. in less than a month. The deadly storm brought more devastation to the U.S. Virgin Islands—which were already reeling from Irma's impact—before ripping through Puerto Rico with winds exceeding 155 mph and torrential rains that caused flooding and landslides.

In Maria's aftermath, survivors saw their lives upended, with homes, businesses and crops wiped out overnight. Severe damage to infrastructure left tens of thousands virtually isolated for weeks and even months, without access to safe drinking water, power or phone service.

In response, hundreds of Red Cross volunteers and employees worked around the clock to support hurricane survivors. Using our donor-supported RC View system, these workers could quickly identify and track urgent needs. Long after landfall, our teams continued to travel throughout the island, often along narrow, winding and unlit mountain roads, to bring much-needed relief to remote areas where storm damage made access difficult.

### Food, Comfort Kits, Water Filters and More

Alongside our nonprofit partners and emergency agencies, dedicated Red Cross disaster workers helped address basic needs for people left reeling by Hurricane Maria, providing meals and bulk food items, snacks and drinking water. In addition, the Red Cross provided cleanup supplies, tarps and comfort kits with hygiene items for residents who had lost nearly everything. We also distributed more than 77,000 critical water purification filters to help residents maintain access to safe drinking water in the absence of a working water infrastructure.

### Reconnecting Families

Due to the difficulties in restoring communications following the storm, many families also had trouble reaching friends and relatives on the island with news. The American Red Cross, assisted by the Spanish and Finnish Red Cross, set up mobile satellite dishes that helped Puerto Ricans reconnect with loved ones, charge their phones and access information on the internet. The technology also helped aid workers coordinate relief efforts.



Top: Red Cross volunteers distribute water, food and other necessities to families affected by Hurricane Maria in Barceloneta, Puerto Rico. Photo by Sergio Rojas/American Red Cross. Bottom: Red Cross workers set up mobile satellite dishes to help Puerto Ricans reconnect with loved ones, inform family members of their safety, charge phones and access information on the internet. Photo by Colin Chaperon/American Red Cross

Workers who set up the mobile satellites witnessed tears of joy as thousands of people spoke with mothers, fathers, grandparents and siblings for the first time since the storm had struck. Just three short words, "I am alive," brought peace of mind to anxious loved ones waiting for news. All told, the Red Cross helped reconnect more than 14,900 families in 51 Puerto Rican municipalities.



## Health Services and Emotional Support

Trained health and mental health workers offered basic health services, particularly for elderly residents who were among the most vulnerable hurricane survivors, along with emotional support for people coping with Maria's traumatic aftermath and its lingering impact on their lives and livelihoods.

Dr. Louisa Rodriguez, a medical doctor from Virginia and American Red Cross volunteer for the past 30 years, traveled all over Puerto Rico with her disaster assessment teammate, Erin McCarthy, to talk directly with people affected by the disaster. "We work with the communities so we can understand the situation through their perspective," she explained.

In Orocovis, the pair met Flor Casiano working in her garden. Flor informed them that she had running water but no electricity. She shared the ongoing difficulties faced by her neighbors and burst into tears after revealing that about half of the houses in her neighborhood were destroyed by the hurricane.

After comforting Flor, Dr. Rodriguez learned that she was having trouble finding food for her dogs in the area. She returned to her car and came back with a plastic bag full of dry pet food. Dr. Rodriguez's trunk is always full of such thoughtful personal surprises. "I never leave a person without first putting a smile on their face," she said.

## Generators to Power Medical Equipment

With power out for many months in many areas, the Red Cross has distributed more than 2,700 gas and solar generators to power life-sustaining medical equipment for survivors suffering from serious health conditions. These residents faced tremendous hardship due to ongoing electrical power outages that lasted for months after the storm had passed.

Luz Maldonado, from Naranjito, and her family were among the recipients. Luz and her son, Christian Martinez, suffer from asthma. Her husband, Fernando Rivera, is diabetic and needs to keep his insulin refrigerated.

"Before I got the generator, I had to throw out fourteen vials of insulin, since I didn't have anywhere to store them," Luz said. "And because of my respiratory problem, I had to go to my neighbor's house for my asthma therapy."



Top: Red Cross volunteers Dr. Louis Rodriguez and Erin McCarthy comfort Maria survivor Flor Casiano in Orocovis, Puerto Rico. Half of the homes in Flor's neighborhood were destroyed. Photo by Elena Sartorius/American Red Cross. Bottom: Red Cross-supplied generators have helped power vital medical equipment for families across Puerto Rico, like Nereida Vázquez Figueroa and her daughter, Claribel, in Naranjito. Photo by Isaac León/American Red Cross

Naranjito, like many towns in Puerto Rico, endured eight months without electricity. "If I didn't have the help of the Red Cross," Luz said, "I might have been hospitalized and maybe lost more of my husband's medication. I am very grateful for the help...thank you."

## Supporting Recovery for Communities Across Puerto Rico

A year after Hurricane Maria slammed into Puerto Rico, many communities remain without reliable access to clean water, electricity, cellular service and essential healthcare needs. The American Red Cross continues to deliver additional recovery support for residents as they pick up the pieces and rebuild their lives.

The Red Cross is working with federal and local officials, as well as other nonprofit and faith-based organizations, to identify the most urgent unmet needs caused by Maria and coordinate long-term recovery efforts. We will use donated funds to strengthen communities across Puerto Rico, with a focus on four key recovery areas: consistent power, clean water, community health and community resiliency.

Concentrating on these key areas through a community-centered recovery approach will help mitigate the devastating impact to key infrastructure and the resulting effects on home life, families, health and the local economy. Many Red Cross projects will also be aimed at individual and community preparedness for the hurricanes that may come later this year or in the years to come.

### Local Schools a Focal Point for Recovery Projects

Schools are central to Puerto Rican communities, and orienting many long-term recovery projects around them strengthens the preparedness of nearby families. For example, installing solar micro-grid power systems helps ensure that schools can serve as emergency shelters, with electricity to power lights, kitchens, water pumps and water heaters.

Likewise, the Red Cross will provide community health programs at schools for children, teachers, the elderly and people living with disabilities. Additionally, we are supporting summer schools and after-school programs in many of these locations to help educate children in disaster preparedness and provide a safe environment while parents work to support their families.

### Solar Micro-Grids Provide Consistent Access to Power and Clean Water

The first two pilot solar micro-grid power systems are already in place and supporting schools and



Top: The Red Cross is working with nonprofit partner Water Mission to install solar micro-grid power systems supporting as many as 20 community wells. Photo by Isaac León/American Red Cross. Bottom: Recovery Executive Officer of the American Red Cross in Puerto Rico, Ana Montero, speaks with Heriberto Orta Pérez, leader of the Pezuela community in Lares, Puerto Rico. Photo by Iris Medero/American Red Cross

communities in Yabucoa and Las Piedras. Ultimately, the Red Cross plans to fund as many as 100 solar power systems in schools across Puerto Rico, each with the ability to generate 50kW of power with a 10-year life span and durable enough to withstand 160 mph uplifts and flying debris. Installing a consistent



power source that can withstand the impact of severe weather will help mitigate the impact of future disasters on these communities.

The Red Cross is also working with Water Mission, a nonprofit partner, to install solar micro-grid power systems supporting as many as 20 community wells, so residents can access clean and safe water in times of emergencies. These systems will serve communities that are not connected to the government water system and rely solely on wells. We will also provide residents with preparedness and water hygiene education.

Heriberto Orta Pérez, leader of the Pezuela community in Lares, Puerto Rico, was grateful for the solar-powered water system installed this September. “We cannot wait for another hurricane to have a self-sufficient water system,” he said. “We have always wanted to have a water system of ours that can be constant, and thanks to the American Red Cross and Water Mission, my community will have it.”

## Power to Serve the Community



After Maria struck, Noemi Hernández reported to work at 6:30 a.m. to make breakfast for the people who were sheltered in the Leoncio Meléndez School in Las Piedras. For Noemi, who has more than 17 years of experience in school lunchrooms, this was her first time in charge of managing the shelter’s meals after a hurricane.

For approximately two months, the lunchroom operated without power. “You can’t imagine what we had to do,” Noemi said. She described trekking food back and forth to another facility that had electrical power, storing it there overnight and returning with it the next morning for that day’s meals.

“Those women of the school lunchrooms are more than heroes,” said Yamilys Roldán, director of the school. They oversaw the provision of three meals a day to around 100 shelter residents, plus 400 additional daily meals for first responders, employees of the municipality and a nearby senior center.

Thanks to generous donations to the Red Cross, the Leoncio Meléndez School received solar panels and battery packs this summer that will power the lunchroom and the shelter area if another storm hits. When asked her reaction, Noemi exclaimed, “¡Diez chocolates!” or “10 chocolates,” a local saying equivalent to ten stars—the highest rating one could provide.

Director Roldán concurred. “Our school is well positioned to serve many families [in times of disaster],” she said, “and with these new tools that the Red Cross provided, we will be able to offer improved feeding service for shelter residents, among other things.”

For Noemi and her colleagues, working at the school shelter in Maria’s aftermath was hard, but rewarding. “It was difficult to leave our families,” she said, “but we did it because we knew that these are people who have more needs than us.”

Left: Left without electrical power, lunch workers at the Leoncio Meléndez School served three meals a day to 100 shelter residents, plus 400 more daily meals to first responders and others, in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. Photo by Isaac León/American Red Cross. Right: Workers install solar panels on the roof of the Leoncio Meléndez School in Las Piedras, Puerto Rico. The Red Cross is funding the installation of solar micro-grid power systems at schools, which often serve as shelters during times of disaster. Photo by Isaac León/American Red Cross



Patricia Osorio Pagán and her son, Elián, with Red Cross worker Aslin Rodríguez at the Juan Asencio Comunidad en Acción summer camp in Aguas Buenas, Puerto Rico. Photo by Iris Medero/American Red Cross

## Community Health and Preparedness

In addition to supporting reliable access to power and water in emergencies, the Red Cross will focus on expanding community health and mental health services. We are also supporting preparedness efforts in affected areas that will help residents become more resilient against future crises.

The Red Cross plans to support up to 15 community health centers and clinics to deliver health and mental health services close to local schools. This includes promoting disease prevention, behavioral health education, health screenings and vaccinations, as well as training teachers in psychological first aid and assistance to the elderly and those with disabilities.

To help families and entire communities become more resilient, the Red Cross will also focus on expanding disaster preparedness efforts, including providing support for after-school programs, summer sessions and preparedness training for teachers and families.

Patricia Osorio Pagán, who lives in the town of Aguas Buenas, received food and water from the Red Cross during the Maria response. When she learned that the Red Cross, in partnership with Save the Children, was sponsoring a summer camp in her community, she signed up her 10-year-old son, Elián.

One of the key elements that was taught in the camp is disaster preparedness. Elián told us that he enjoyed this summer camp, “because I can distract myself, play and learn what to do in case of an emergency.”

Patricia, who has two more children, is thankful that her son not only had the opportunity to learn new skills and play with other children, but also that he learned how to be better prepared for disasters—and shared those lessons with the family.

The first days after the hurricane, Patricia explained that her family relied on food delivered by a helicopter to feed her children. “Now we are better prepared,” she said. “We have bottled water, canned food and know what to do before a storm comes.”



## Training and Grants to Boost Local Economies

Community recovery projects funded by the Red Cross will also provide support to local economies. The Puerto Rican companies that install the solar power systems will include local trainees in their crews, adding jobs and providing workers with new skills.

We are also supporting the sustainability of the farming sector by increasing food grown on the island and reducing reliance on imported agricultural products. The Red Cross will award micro-grants to support small farmers, and deliver educational workshops to help farmers become successful entrepreneurs.

## Compassionate Supporters Fund Relief and Recovery for Maria Survivors

Buildings and communities that were built over decades were destroyed in just a few terrible days by Maria, and rebuilding will be neither quick nor easy. It will

take time for people to heal, rebuild and recover, and the Red Cross is working to strengthen the impacted communities and support their ongoing recovery.

None of our response or recovery assistance would be possible without the extraordinary support of our donors. The Red Cross has raised \$71.7 million, including the value of critical donated goods and services, to help Hurricane Maria survivors.

As of September 17, 2018, the Red Cross had already programmed approximately \$42.3 million on relief and recovery efforts for people affected by Hurricane Maria. The remaining funds will be used to continue delivering aid to families and communities with the greatest needs.

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



Red Cross volunteers distribute water, food and other necessities to families affected by Hurricane Maria. Photo by Sergio Rojas/American Red Cross





# Your Gifts Brought Help and Hope to People in Need

Generous donors have helped provide relief and ongoing recovery support for individuals, families and communities devastated by Hurricane Maria.



**American Red Cross**



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

As of September 17, 2018 (\$71.7M raised)

Expense Categories	Food and Relief Items	Health and Emotional Support	Individual and Community Recovery	Total	Expense %
Food, relief items and other assistance <sup>2</sup>	\$18.9	\$0.2	–	\$19.1	45.2%
Freight, postage, warehousing and other logistics that enable service delivery	\$8.3	–	–	\$8.3	19.6%
Deployment and maintenance of volunteers and staff (includes airfare, lodging, meals and vehicles)	\$5.0	\$0.4	–	\$5.4	12.8%
Long-term recovery disbursements on grants to help meet unmet needs	–	–	\$1.7	\$1.7	4.0%
Temporary disaster employees and long-term recovery hires	\$1.4	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$1.6	3.8%
Long-term recovery projects	–	–	\$1.0	\$1.0	2.4%
IT, communications, and call centers	\$0.6	\$0.1	–	\$0.7	1.7%
Full-time Red Cross employees	\$0.3	\$0.1	\$0.1	\$0.5	1.2%
Equipment, maintenance and fueling of Red Cross emergency vehicles and rented trucks	\$0.2	–	–	\$0.2	0.5%
<b>Total Program Expenses</b>	<b>\$34.7</b>	<b>\$0.9</b>	<b>\$2.9</b>	<b>\$38.5</b>	<b>91%</b>
Management, general and fundraising <sup>3</sup>				\$3.8	9%
<b>Total Expenses</b>				<b>\$42.3</b>	
Program Dollars Remaining <sup>4</sup>				\$26.8	
Management, general and fundraising remaining to be applied				\$2.6	
<b>Total Budget</b>				<b>\$71.7</b>	

<sup>1</sup>Because the Hurricane Irma response in the U.S. Virgin Islands was already underway when they were impacted by Hurricane Maria, the costs for the response to both storms in the U.S. Virgin Islands were included in the Hurricane Irma budget.

<sup>2</sup>Does not include value of U.S. government-provided supplies distributed by the American Red Cross.

<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 21,000 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 Maria will be spent on our services to people affected by Hurricane Maria.

<sup>4</sup>Includes \$4.4 million in committed grants that have already been signed.

*Thank you!*

The Red Cross must be ready for every disaster, big or small, and we respond to an average of nearly 64,000 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.



**American  
Red Cross**

### **Mission**

The American Red Cross prevents and alleviates human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.