

# California Wildfires

## Immediate Financial Assistance



**American  
Red Cross**

September 17, 2020

Since August, the American Red Cross has worked closely with partners to support emergency housing efforts, and provide food, water, relief supplies, emotional support and health services to people in need. Thanks to our generous donors, we are now starting to get emergency financial assistance into the hands of California residents whose homes were severely impacted by the recent wildfires.

This financial assistance will allow people to make their own decisions and prioritize what their family needs most to start recovering. Funds can help families replace clothes or food, offset transportation costs, or support any other immediate need. Spending these funds locally will also support local communities as they begin recovering.

### **Eligibility**

The Red Cross is providing \$450 to households whose homes were confirmed to have been destroyed or sustained major damage from the recent California Wildfires. To be eligible, households must meet all of the following requirements:

- Applicant's pre-disaster primary residence is located in a confirmed disaster-impacted geographic area.
- Applicant is the head of household and is not listed as a household member on any other Red Cross assistance application.
- Applicant's primary residence suffered major damage or was destroyed, as verified by CAL FIRE.
  - Major damage is indicated by significant structural damage to a residence that requires extensive repairs. This may include substantial failure of the roof, walls or foundation.
  - A residence that is destroyed is one that is a total loss or with damage so extensive that repair is not feasible.
- Applicant's identity and proof of residence details can be verified.

### **Enrollment**

Eligible households should apply over the phone by calling 800-RED-CROSS and selecting option 4. Due to the number of people impacted by the fires, callers may experience long wait times. The Red Cross will also work with partners and community advocates to reach people who may face barriers to accessing disaster assistance such as those who do not speak English, are not American citizens, or have difficulty accessing services.

Red Cross assistance is available for eligible households no matter which recent wildfire affected them. California households may apply for assistance at any time, but their application won't be approved until the Red Cross receives damage verification from CAL FIRE, which is an ongoing process.

After a household's application is approved, Red Cross immediate financial assistance will be delivered through one of several electronic funds transfer (EFT) methods including PayPal, Mastercard Send, Zelle or Walmart Direct2Cash.

All Red Cross services, including financial assistance, are available to individuals regardless of nationality, race, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. The Red Cross is a charity, not a government agency and people do not need to be American citizens to receive help. Our financial assistance is not a loan and does not need to be repaid.

### **Future Assistance**

Even as the Red Cross delivers emergency relief, such as food, shelter and immediate assistance, we are looking to the future and planning how to help affected communities and families recover in the months and years ahead. For example, depending on available resources, we may be able to provide additional support, such as financial assistance for the hardest-hit households or grants to other community organizations with expertise in certain specialized recovery services. The Red Cross also provides financial assistance for verified, disaster-caused health and mental health needs.