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American Red Cross Issues Appeal For Disaster Relief Fund

Anticipates spending in excess of \$15 Million for recent disasters

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WASHINGTON, Friday, June 13, 2008 The American Red Cross anticipates spending millions as it moves forward with relief efforts for the victims of flooding and tornadoes across seven states, an enormous geographic area. From Kansas to West Virginia, the Red Cross is present with vast amounts of clean up supplies, dozens of shelters and tens of thousands of meals.

Already, more than 1,400 Red Cross workers are assisting people in the affected area, and the organization is gearing up to provide additional relief. The current relief operations follow two extremely busy months for the Red Cross, with 27 disaster operations in April and May. These operations will cost the Red Cross millions of dollars and the help of the American public is needed to meet the growing needs.

"Our first priority in flooding is to provide shelter and food for people in the immediate area until the waters recede and recovery can begin," said Joe Becker, senior vice president, Disaster Services for the American Red Cross. "But the help we give depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public."

Over the past days, the Red Cross has responded to tornados in Kansas, and floods in Iowa, Nebraska, Wisconsin, Indiana and West Virginia. Thousands of people are staying in more than 41 shelters and more than 115,000 meals and snacks have been served. This spring, the American Red Cross responded to more than 30 large scale disasters due to severe weather.

The Red Cross is coordinating with local emergency officials, community organizations and faith-based groups to pre-position relief supplies, such as cots, blankets and comfort kits, and is preparing to open additional shelters if needed.

"We are concerned for the more than 500,000 people who live within five miles of this stretch of the Mississippi River as the floods move south," Becker said. "Red Cross chapters along the river are monitoring the situation, and are prepared to mobilize resources to respond."

The Red Cross encourages those affected to register their status on the Safe and Well Web site on www.redcross.org so loved ones can know they are safe.

It is anticipated that relief efforts will cost tens of millions of dollars. In order to quickly respond to anyone with disaster-caused needs, the Red Cross must have money available immediately. This emergency resource is provided by the Red Cross Disaster Relief Fund.

Visit www.redcross.org to find out the latest information and learn how you can help; you can also visit <http://redcrossmidwestflooding.wordpress.com/maps/> to view an interactive map for the current Red Cross response.

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 thousands of disasters across the

country each year, disasters like the tornadoes and floods in the Central United States, 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 victims of disaster. The American Red Cross honors donor intent. If you wish to designate your donation to a specific disaster please do so at the time of your donation. Call 1-800-REDCROSS 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.

[Close this Page](#)

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