



**American
Red Cross**

Alaska Storms and Floods 2025 Community Partner Update

October 19, 2025

Red Cross Continues to Meet Needs in Alaska

In times of disaster, it can be tempting to compare one event to another — this storm to that storm or this flood to that flood. The last. However, when we do that, we risk overlooking the most important element: people.

Every disaster is unique because every community is unique. The American Red Cross recognizes that the impact of a disaster is shaped not just by the force of nature, but by the people it affects — their history, their culture, and their circumstances.

Alaska is unlike any other place. It is home to nearly 230 federally recognized tribes, each with its own language, geography, and traditions. Among them are the Yup'ik people, whose ancestors migrated from Siberia over 3,000 years ago — before the rise of the Roman Empire.

Today, many of these communities are facing devastating flooding that has forced families from their homes and, in some cases, from lands their people have inhabited for millennia. The town of Bethel, located 400 miles from Anchorage and accessible only by air or water, has become a critical hub for evacuations. Flights continue to transport evacuees to a mega shelter in Anchorage, where the Red Cross and partners are providing safe refuge.

We anticipate that up to 2,000 people may be displaced, with no clear timeline for when they can return home. For communities along the Bering Sea, winter preparation is a matter of survival. These preparations, such as subsistence harvesting, food storage, and fuel stockpiling, are essential in a region where winter temperatures can plunge to minus 10 to 10 degrees Fahrenheit from

November through March. With homes and food stores destroyed, staying behind is simply not an option.

In partnership with state and local organizations, the Red Cross provides compassionate care to evacuees arriving in Anchorage. More than 600 individuals have arrived to date and we anticipate this number to grow through the weekend. Responders will provide safe shelter, nourishing meals, emotional support, and essential supplies. We are also working with community partners to provide clothing and footwear for those who fled with little more than what they were wearing.

Understanding the cultural context is vital. Our team has implemented a cultural competency protocol and engaged a cultural liaison to ensure our services are respectful, directed, and tailored to the needs of each community. We are not just providing relief and support but handing ensuring those impacted have provided the critical commodities hope and dignity in their recovery.

As this crisis continues to unfold, we remain committed to supporting Alaska's communities for the long term. Your support enables us to respond with compassion, efficiency and cultural sensitivity — because every person, every family and every community matters.

From the Field: Narrative by Scott Marder, Red Cross Comms and Media

Everywhere I went today, I was reminded just how extraordinary Red Cross volunteers are.

This morning, Alli, my Special Public Outreach Team counterpart, and I stopped by the shelter at the Alaska Airlines Center to meet a local business that was donating shoes. So many people airlifted from their villages arrived with nothing but rubber boots. They needed something as simple, and as vital, as shoes and socks. This same business had already donated winter coats the day before, yet here they were again, giving more.

Inside the shelter, I met volunteers who have been giving everything they have to help the people of western Alaska. Many flew long hours to get here and are now working twelve-hour days. Ninety percent of our Red Cross workforce is made up of volunteers, and every one of them came here for a single reason: to help.

I met Barbara Riester, a volunteer for more than fifty years. She lives on the East Coast and spent half a day traveling to get here. When I asked why she keeps doing this after so many years, she smiled and said simply, "Because people need us."

Then there was Brenda Bridges, a shelter manager from California. She's been working nonstop since she arrived, yet despite her exhaustion, she carried a spark in her eye and a warmth that filled the room.

And Bruce Whalen, a lifelong Alaskan and proud member of a local tribe, has volunteered with the Red Cross for more than twenty years, ever since Hurricane Katrina. He spoke with love about the villages hit hardest by the

floods, about their resilience, traditions and deep self-reliance. You could hear tremendous pride in his voice.

As the day went on, I met more volunteers, some who had arrived just hours earlier, long after midnight. With only a few hours of rest, they were back at work by 7:00 a.m. There's something almost magical about the Red Cross, about how people from every corner of the country come together to serve others. It certainly isn't the money that brings anyone here. It's something far more powerful.

Each day here reaffirms my belief in the goodness of people. It leaves me humbled, proud and deeply grateful to be part of this mission.

The Red Cross mission is to alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies. Through more than 60,000 disasters every 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. Your donation helps us bring comfort in the wake of disasters and helps provide the resources to guide those affected through recovery and become better prepared for future emergencies. We are grateful for your trust.

Thank you!

Response at a Glance

The American Red Cross has deployed Alaskan and National Red Cross Volunteers and Staff members from everywhere you can imagine to respond and support.



As of 10/18/25, Red Cross is helping support 16 shelters in partnership with state and local partners, sheltering and feeding 778 evacuee statewide.



More than 200 trained Red Cross workers have helped people with medical, disability, emotional or spiritual needs in the past three days.



In Anchorage, two large shelters are being managed in conjunction with local partners at the Alaska Airlines Center and Egan Convention Center.

—Cumulative figures as of October 19, 2025