



American Red Cross

Provide Shelter in Times of Need

Become a Member of the Emergency Shelter Program

Facilities like yours enable the American Red Cross to provide disaster sheltering services to communities that rely on us. The partnerships we build create a network of preparedness and support for the community in times of need.

PROGRAM GOAL

To identify, assess, secure and document facilities that can be available for the community in times of emergencies.

SHELTER CATEGORIES

Red Cross Managed

Managed by Red Cross in cooperation with a variety of partners.

Partner Managed

Similar to more traditional Red Cross-managed shelters, a partner-managed shelter uses the standard facility agreement and is run in accordance to Red Cross



standards. Partners include facility owners, other agencies and community members that may provide services, supplies and equipment, or staff who are willing to support the shelter.



This is a great way to get your community involved with disaster relief. The Red Cross will provide all necessary training to your community members.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is a Red Cross shelter and when are they used?

A Red Cross shelter is a safe place to sleep, eat, get information, maintain personal hygiene, and access services. Any time a natural or man-made disaster such as fire, flood, or hurricane displaces large numbers of people from their home, Red Cross endeavors to provide shelter to the people affected.

What type of space does a shelter require?

Facilities with a large open space such as a gym, fellowship hall or auditorium of at least 2,000 square feet for a dormitory, with additional space for registration and feeding are ideal. The rooms can be separate or part of the same large space with defined areas. The facility should also have at least one handicapped-accessible entrance and toilet. Showers are not required, but would add convenience.

When are shelters opened?

The Red Cross assesses the need for a shelter as soon as, if not before, a disaster occurs. Some disasters, like hurricanes, provide some advanced warning, while home fires can occur at any time.

What does it mean when a facility is designated as a Red Cross shelter?

When a facility joins the Red Cross Emergency Shelter Program, it is registered in the Red Cross National Shelter System as a facility that might be available to shelter those affected, depending on the availability of the facility. The Red Cross coordinates opening a shelter with the designated representative of the facility.

Does being part of the Emergency Shelter Program obligate the facility to anything?

No. Participation in the Emergency Shelter Program is completely voluntary. While we always hope that a shelter will be available in time of need, we understand that previous facility commitments may not make it possible. For this reason, we constantly strive to add new facilities to our current shelter list.

What is the cost involved in being a Red Cross shelter?

When we activate a facility in our Emergency Shelter Program, associated costs like feeding shelter residents, damage caused to the facility, and utility overages during the period the shelter is open, are covered by the Red Cross.

What is our liability for damages to the facility?

The Red Cross assumes responsibility for damages to a facility incurred during its operation as a shelter.

What are the requirements for participation in the Emergency Shelter Program?

Facilities need to be safe, secure, and comfortable spaces that can accommodate a minimum of 50 people (40 square feet per person). A small kitchen from which to serve food is highly preferred. Other amenities for recreation, television, children's area, showers, etc. would add convenience but are not required.

Are we required to provide shelter staff?

No, you just open the building and we do the rest. If you wish to have a shelter team, then you may provide shelter staff that have received shelter operations training. This provides your community the opportunity to participate in assisting those who have been displaced by disasters. Those could even be members of your community. Also, because partner shelter teams are local, they may be quicker to respond than someone across the city.

What training is involved in being a shelter worker?

The Red Cross training to become a shelter worker requires: completing volunteer paperwork authorizing a free background check, followed by a six-hour shelter training class conducted by an authorized Red Cross instructor, free of charge. Training will be provided on-site at the convenience of the facility and the designated shelter team.

NEXT STEPS

Step 1

Obtain approval and support from your facility leaders including: management, board, advisory council, etc.



Step 2

Contact your local Red Cross Shelter Program Manager at terry.lawrenson@redcross.org to find out more about the program and schedule a survey.



Step 3

Sign a Shelter Agreement and complete a Facility Survey.



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.