



American Red Cross
New York State

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Joint Legislative Public Hearing
2014-2015 Executive Budget Proposal
Public Protection
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The American Red Cross in New York State would like to thank Senator DeFrancisco, Assemblyman Farrell, and the New York State Legislature for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding the 2014-2015 Executive Budget proposal.

The Executive Budget includes \$3.3 million for the American Red Cross in New York State. This funding is necessary to allow us to maintain basic services for the next fiscal year. Last year, with help from \$3.3 million in funding secured through the Executive Budget, the Red Cross was able to, among other things:

- Assist **5,451** families affected by local disasters like house fires (not including large-scale events such as the Mohawk Valley flooding);
- Train **48,927** people in emergency preparedness through our community disaster education programs; and
- Collect approximately **378,000** units of blood, providing approximately **120** hospitals with **345,000** blood products.

Our organization is comprised of 22 chapters and the New York-Penn Blood Services Region. Volunteers comprise 97 percent of our workforce, making our organization efficient and cost-effective. An average of 91 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs.

At the state level, the Red Cross is the only nonprofit agency that is a member of the State Disaster Preparedness Commission. The State Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan assigns the Red Cross a major role in feeding and sheltering disaster victims. The Red Cross is also the only nonprofit organization chartered by Congress to provide disaster relief, yet our chapters do not receive federal funding.

In every corner of our state, the Red Cross immediately responds to disasters whenever they occur. No other nonprofit organization in the state has our capability to mobilize resources in a moment's notice to meet the needs of New Yorkers during disasters.

Our mission is to provide relief to New Yorkers whose lives have been affected by the 3,992 disasters per year in New York and to help people prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. Last year alone, the Red Cross spent over \$3 million on direct disaster response (temporary housing, food, and financial assistance) for local disasters such as house fires.

While local disasters represent the overwhelming majority of Red Cross responses, this past year saw yet another natural disaster with the Mohawk Valley flooding. These continued responses year after year would not have been possible without the prior support of New York

State. This support was critical to the Red Cross response efforts, and highlights why continued support is needed. For example, State funding supported the recruitment and training of 8,167 New York volunteers who were ready to help when the storm hit, and continued funding will help the Red Cross ensure that our staff and the public are properly trained and prepared for when the next disaster strikes.

The American Red Cross is uniquely positioned to partner with the state moving forward not only because we have a presence in all 62 counties across the state but also because we have responded to the exponential growth in use of the Internet and social media. More people are turning to their computers and smart phones to prepare for disasters, get updates, seek help, give help and connect with loved ones.

In addition to in-person training opportunities, the American Red Cross offers online disaster, CPR and preparedness training that New Yorkers can do from any location with a computer. This training is available to the general public and also to prepare potential volunteers to respond to disasters. In addition, The American Red Cross has launched mobile apps that give New Yorkers current disaster and first aid information in the palm of their hand.

These innovative training and information opportunities not only allow New Yorkers to be better able to respond but also allow the American Red Cross to use limited resources most effectively. The American Red Cross in New York State needs to ensure that our chapters are properly prepared to meet the needs of the communities we serve in the event of large-scale disasters, both natural and man-made, as well as everyday disasters such as fires, floods and building collapses.

The Red Cross receives the vast majority of its funds in the form of donations from private citizens, in addition to foundation and corporate support. While the need for our services and assistance continues to grow, the financial resources available to Red Cross chapters to meet those needs have not kept pace.

While we strive to increase our revenues and control expenses in the face of growing needs, the Red Cross must look to our government partners to help us to continue to meet the needs of New Yorkers. The support we have received from the State of New York since 2005 is vital in addressing our needs.

The Red Cross is confident that funding of \$3.3 million in the 2014-2015 state budget will continue our ability to protect the health and welfare of the citizens of New York State. The American Red Cross and the State of New York have developed a strong partnership over the years and we look forward to continuing this partnership and working effectively to prepare, prevent and respond to future disasters in New York.