



**American Red Cross**  
Hawaii State Chapter

RECEIVED  
CITY CLERK  
C & C OF HONOLULU

2015 JUN -1 AM 8:18

June 1, 2015

Honolulu City Council  
530 S. King Street, Room 202  
Honolulu, HI 96813

**Re: CR-167, Bill 13, CD2**  
**FY16 City and County of Honolulu Grant-in-Aid (American National Red Cross)**

Dear Councilmembers:

The American Red Cross of Hawaii requests your support of City funding for \$150,000 through the Grant-in-Aid process for our Disaster Response and Preparedness Program for all communities on Oahu. This funding is currently in the FY16 budget, and we request your support in maintaining this level of funding. Each year, the American Red Cross delivers help, hope and healing to people affected by disasters by transforming donors' generous funding into shelter, food and emotional support. Our mission is to prevent and alleviate human suffering in the face of emergencies by mobilizing the power of volunteers and generosity of donors. The Red Cross is the only nonprofit organization that responds to disasters 24/7, 365 days a year.

City grant-in-aid funding would help support our infrastructure needs that are absolutely essential to run the Red Cross. Funding would be used to train volunteer disaster responders and dedicate staff time to reach vulnerable economically and socially disadvantaged communities with disaster preparedness information through community outreach. Specifically, it would support the partial salaries of our Individual Preparedness & Community Resiliency Manager, Disaster Program Specialist, and Disaster Services Director. These expenses are necessary and directly related to our disaster preparedness and response efforts on Oahu.

Whenever there is a disaster, Red Cross volunteer caseworkers are on the scene within two hours anytime and anywhere, to help the family cope with their tragic loss and make sure they have long-term resources in place to assist with their recovery. Besides food, clothing, and shelter, the Red Cross provides invaluable crisis counseling through trained volunteer mental health and professionals and nurses. This service is particularly vital when the disaster involves fatalities or life threatening injuries.

Our Disaster Preparedness Program also provides individuals, families, schools, businesses, and communities with knowledge and skills to better prepare themselves and others before emergencies occur. Because a disaster can strike at any time without notice, advance preparation makes a significant difference in the well-being of a family or the resiliency of a business. Disaster preparedness helps to build more resilient communities. Hawaii is the most isolated population on the face of the earth, so we need to be able to stand on our own until help comes from the mainland, especially if our harbors and airports are destroyed.

In the past fiscal year (7/1/13-6/30/14), the Hawaii Red Cross responded to 34 disasters on Oahu and assisted 245 individuals. Of those families we assisted, at least 34% lived below the poverty level, 60%

Red Cross Letter to Honolulu City Councilmembers

did not own their own home, and 57% did not have structure insurance. We served 568 meals and snacks to disaster survivors and emergency responders on Oahu. There were 575 community volunteers trained specifically in disaster response (including Shelter Management, Mass Care, Disaster Health Services and Crisis Counseling) and 146 partner volunteers (reserve corps of volunteers who can be activated during a large-scale disaster) trained on Oahu. Through presentations and materials, we also shared critical disaster preparedness information with 16,187 people on Oahu on how to prepare for emergencies. There were 428 active volunteers and 586 volunteer partners on Oahu.

During the first ten months of FY15, we have responded to 26 disasters on Oahu helping 143 individuals, reached 18,050 people with disaster preparedness information through 96 community disaster education presentations, and held 68 disaster and community partner volunteer trainings, issuing 878 training certificates.

In addition to everyday disasters, in August 2014, as Iselle approached the islands with hurricane force winds, the Hawaii Red Cross began planning with State and County Civil Defense as well as other partners at Emergency Operations Centers across the state. We put 1,500 volunteers on alert and over 200 Red Cross workers assisted with the response (about 94% were volunteers). The public was informed on how to prepare and what items they would need in their disaster kits and to take with them to hurricane shelters. We opened 32 evacuation shelters (10 of them on Oahu) housing 2,041 people in one night. Red Cross evacuation shelters were staffed with Red Cross volunteer nurses and trained mental health workers, and these workers helped 950 people with health assessments and emotional support. Following Iselle, we scrambled to prepare for Julio. In the midst of these disasters, we responded to 8 home fires in 2 weeks (3 on Oahu, 2 on the Big Isle, 2 on Maui, and 1 on Kauai). Then in October 2014, Hurricane Ana threatened our islands and we opened 13 shelters (5 on Oahu).

Of course, response is only the tip of the spear. It takes preparation, resources, and infrastructure to be able to immediately respond to disasters anytime and anywhere throughout the year. We accomplish this with a small staff and hundreds of volunteers who work 12-hour shifts, morning, noon, and night. Volunteers need to be recruited beforehand and trained, put on call, and deployed at a moment's notice whenever there is a disaster. We are a very efficient and effective organization because we highly leverage our volunteer resources and use them wisely.

The Red Cross is dedicated to helping Oahu families and communities build their capacity to be ready for emergencies. This knowledge and preparation will help build confidence, peace of mind, and an ability to withstand, quickly adapt to, and successfully recover from disasters. We really need and appreciate your help to fund our vital Disaster Preparedness and Response Program on Oahu, and humbly ask for your support. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (808) 739-8103 or [Coralie.Matayoshi@redcross.org](mailto:Coralie.Matayoshi@redcross.org).

With warm aloha,



Coralie Chun Matayoshi  
Chief Executive Officer