



Board Agenda Item 42

DATE: September 9, 2025

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBMITTED BY: Joe Prado, Interim Director, Department of Public Health

SUBJECT: Memorandum of Understanding with the American Red Cross

RECOMMENDED ACTION(S):

Approve and authorize the Chairman to execute a Memorandum of Understanding with American Red Cross to coordinate sheltering services during emergencies and disasters in Fresno County, effective upon execution, not to exceed ten consecutive years, which includes a five-year base contract and one optional five-year extension (\$0).

There is no additional Net County Cost associated with the recommended action, which establishes a formal partnership with the American Red Cross to support coordinated disaster sheltering, mass care, and recovery services when needed during emergencies or disasters in Fresno County. The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) defines roles and responsibilities, facilitates integration into County response operations, and strengthens the County's capacity to serve the community during large-scale incidents. This item is countywide.

ALTERNATIVE ACTION(S):

Should your Board choose not to approve the recommended action, the County may lack a clearly defined framework for coordination with the American Red Cross during emergencies or disasters, which may lead to inefficiencies or delays in providing critical sheltering and recovery services to impacted community members.

In the absence of this MOU, any shelters activated during emergencies would be operated and coordinated entirely by County of Fresno staff. This would include full responsibility for case management, providing three meals a day plus snacks, overall shelter management, and coordination of services-all of which would significantly strain County resources and staff capacity during a disaster response.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no increase in Net County Cost associated with the recommended action. The American Red Cross is a volunteer-led humanitarian organization that delivers services under its Congressional Charter and through national and state-level emergency coordination agreements. This MOU does not establish any financial commitments or obligations between the County and the American Red Cross.

DISCUSSION:

The County of Fresno, through its Office of Emergency Services (OES), is responsible for coordinating disaster preparedness, response, and recovery efforts in accordance with the County's Emergency

Operations Plan. The American Red Cross provides mass care and sheltering services across the United States and is a key partner in delivering humanitarian relief during emergencies. This MOU establishes a cooperative framework that outlines mutual responsibilities, methods of communication, and areas of coordination before, during, and after disasters.

Under this agreement, the Red Cross will support Fresno County with services such as emergency sheltering, feeding operations, disaster health and mental health support, reunification services, and other recovery assistance as needed. The Red Cross may also participate in planning, training, and community preparedness activities in coordination with OES.

The MOU specifies that the Red Cross will not self-deploy and will only activate in support of the County upon request. It includes provisions for information sharing, integration into the County's Emergency Operations Center, and outlines expectations for coordination during joint shelter operations.

This MOU includes a mutual indemnification clause, whereby both the County and The American Red Cross agree to defend, indemnify, and hold one another harmless for claims resulting from their respective negligent or intentional acts or omissions. This differs from the County's standard indemnification provision and is disclosed accordingly.

The MOU also clarifies that the Red Cross is operating as an independent contractor, not as an agent or employee of the County. Each party is responsible for its own personnel, insurance, and compliance with applicable laws.

Approval of this MOU will strengthen the County's disaster readiness and ensure efficient collaboration with one of its most critical response partners during emergencies and disasters.

ATTACHMENTS INCLUDED AND/OR ON FILE:

On file with Clerk - MOU with American Red Cross

CAO ANALYST:

Ron Alexander