



# Time to Act

Annual Report 2024



*Act.*

# Your support for Time to Act is **changing lives**

The Canadian Red Cross acts out of necessity. When towns burn and lives are threatened, we act. When cities flood and people are forced from their homes, we act. When people lose their social connections and overall health suffers, we act.

## **Time to Act was created by this necessity.**

Thanks to your incredible generosity and passion for Canada, this initiative is already making a tangible difference in the lives of Canadians who have been impacted by disasters.

This past summer, in Jasper, your investment was felt directly by people returning home after the fires. People like Harry and Sylvia, who received relief supplies and emotional support at the Jasper Re-Entry Support Centre—a one-stop shop to provide access to a range of services to help them navigate their return.

"The support we got there, not only mentally, but financially from the Red Cross, was absolutely stunning," said Harry.

The white tents [that dotted the park in central Jasper](#)—the very same we use around the world for our field hospitals—represented the success of Time to Act in leveraging our international expertise for our needs in Canada.

Not only in Jasper, but across the country, we are seeing the threat of a changing climate before our very eyes. Record breaking temperatures, severe storms, and millions upon millions of hectares of forests burned.

To meet these rising needs, we have set out to enhance our capabilities in three critical areas: **people, supplies, and technology.**

When the unthinkable happens, Canadians rely on the Canadian Red Cross to be there for them in their time of need. In this report, you will see that your investment is doing just that.

Because of your support, we are building a humanitarian workforce for tomorrow—creating specialized teams to bolster readiness and response; educating the next generation of public health professionals; and ensuring a diverse and inclusive response so we can be there for everyone in Canada. We are also leveraging our expertise in international disaster response here in Canada and creating new ways to respond to climate-related emergencies like heat waves to keep people safe.

As we look ahead, we remain steadfast in our mission to help people in need, before, during, and after emergencies.

Together, we will continue to **innovate, adapt, and act with urgency.** Thank you for your unwavering commitment to strengthening Canada's resilience through Time to Act.

**Cover:** A Canadian Red Cross worker overlooks the Re-entry Support Centre in Jasper, Alberta.



# Your investment is **strengthening** **our abilities** across the board

By investing in Time to Act, you have enhanced our capacity to respond to emergencies across stages from volunteer recruitment to preparedness and deployment.







“Year after year, the Canadian Red Cross is witnessing an increase in extreme weather events and also concurrent events that are impacting communities across the country. By better understanding the risks, we can adopt mitigation strategies in an effort to reduce the severity of emergencies and disasters on people living in Canada.”

**CONRAD SAUVÉ**

PRESIDENT AND CEO OF THE CANADIAN RED CROSS

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Canadian Red Cross personnel surveys floodings in Gatineau, Quebec. In response to the floods in May 2023, the Red Cross provided lodging, necessities, and comfort to people affected by the rising waters.



# People: Building a strong humanitarian workforce for Canada

The Canadian Red Cross would be nothing without our dedicated and knowledgeable personnel—from Personal Disaster Assistance volunteers, who aid and comfort after a home fire, to Rapid Response Managers, who deploy at a moment's notice to the scene of disaster anywhere in the country to lead relief efforts—our people are at the heart of what we do.

Your investment in Time to Act (People) creates and maintains specialized teams to improve Canada's ability to respond to climate disasters, healthcare emergencies, and other crises, including the ability to rapidly mobilize teams across the country to respond to large-scale events.

**Here are the ways your gift has been working to enhance our workforce to be ready for what comes next:**

## > Ready When the Time Comes

Expanded volunteer roles such as People Services Responder for the Ready When the Time Comes program, a program in which employees of the Canadian Red Cross' corporate partners are seconded to a Canadian Red Cross response—a reserve humanitarian force we call upon in times of need.

## > Indigenous Cultural Safety

Reviewed and updated Indigenous Cultural Safety training and exercises and provided them to Red Cross leadership throughout the country, who will in turn implement these trainings locally.

## > Personnel Well-being

Established a committee to advise on stronger psychosocial well-being and support of staff and volunteers during emergencies responses, leading to the creation of a website and risk factor assessment offering basic, targeted, and intensive services and supports.

## > Leadership Development

Adapted new framework, tools, and training for leadership—a total of 200 participants in four cohorts have now completed the six-month long program, improving leadership skills and employee satisfaction.

## > HumaniT Digital Content Creation

Created a new digital content experience for volunteers, HumaniT, meant to increase their engagement and sense of belonging, with the ultimate goal of improving volunteer retention.

## > Event-based Volunteer Program

Designed a new volunteer program based on short-term volunteer mobilization to specific emergency events, with a Program Designer hired in March 2023.

## > People Partnership Strategy

Delivered operational strategies, tactics, tools, and metrics aligned with our vision 2025 strategy to take our People Resources to the next level.

## > Community Engagement and Accountability

Created a holistic strategy for Community Engagement and Accountability, including new policies, procedures, and trainings on Safeguarding—the action of protecting the organization's personnel as well as those we help.

## > SPARK Project

Supported young academics in Canada through internships and practicums in the area of public health, creating the next generation of public health leaders.

Taken together, these projects are crucial for the Canadian Red Cross in enhancing our **ability to respond** effectively to emergencies and serve **diverse communities** across our country.

### Who you are impacting (2023-2024 fiscal year)



**81,000+** people supported in Canada after an emergency



**14,000+** active volunteers



**2,900+** staff

# Creating a SPARK: Fostering public health leadership

The Strategic Partnerships with Academia for Research and Knowledge (SPARK) project is an innovative initiative which builds leadership in the public health field through high-quality training for young people. This project provides Canadian youth, students, and volunteers with an opportunity to gain invaluable experience in public health from the Canadian Red Cross, a global leader in public health humanitarian responses.

**Your support for SPARK has enabled:**




- High-level analysis, such as preparing for the next pandemic, ethical exit strategies from humanitarian programming, and documenting Red Cross experiences in public health.
- Three peer-reviewed publications and ten presentations at the Canadian Conference on Global Health.
- Strengthening of the Canadian Red Cross' emergency responses—specifically to wildfires and Tuberculosis—as well as our work with Indigenous communities.
- Expansion of partnerships with universities.
- Strengthening of evidence-based programming within the organization.

Your commitment to *Time to Act* (People) has supported young academics and professionals in contributing important research to help Canada be ready for the next public health crisis. While not all the participants stay with the Canadian Red Cross after their practicum, their contribution during their time here and career development benefits not only our organization but Canada as a whole.

“The work I’ve done at the Canadian Red Cross during my practicum was part of the reason I got my first job after my Masters of Public Health. I definitely value what I learnt during the several months at the Canadian Red Cross, and all of the different things I got to work on outside of my main project!”

**SPARK PARTICIPANT**

**2023-2024 SPARK cohort by the numbers\***

-  **30** students and volunteers engaged in SPARK. Of those, 13 were retained by the Canadian Red Cross.
-  **8,824** hours collectively contributed to Canadian Red Cross public health projects, a 33% increase compared to 2018-2022 levels.
-  **Funding for two** Canadian Institute of Health Research fellows and one Mitacs fellow leveraged and allocated to SPARK, contributing to high-priority research projects at the Canadian Red Cross.



**“In the face of escalating climate crises, complacency is not an option.”**

**AMY AVIS**

CHIEF, HUMANITARIAN SERVICES, CANADIAN RED CROSS

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Your investment in Time to Act is leading the way in reimagining emergency response for the 21st century. As Canada becomes more and more impacted by climate emergencies—from atmospheric river events to hurricanes to wildfires—the Canadian Red Cross is leveraging our decades of international expertise for use here at home, thanks to your commitment.



# Supplies: Providing for Canada's Emergency Readiness and Response

Your support for Time to Act (Supplies) has enhanced our ability to provide emergency supplies where and when they are needed from coast to coast to coast.

From the humble blanket and teddy bear to give comfort and warmth after a family home burns down in Victoria, British Columbia, to innovative specialized equipment like our Emergency Response Unit (ERU) deploying to the scene of a wildfire in Tantallon, Nova Scotia—the stockpiling, positioning, and maintenance of our supplies is crucial to any response.

## Emergency Response Unit (ERU)

The Canadian Red Cross Emergency Response Unit (ERU) is a standardized package of equipment modules, as well as Red Cross personnel, ready to deploy on short notice. In fact, the ERU can be deployed within 48 hours to anywhere in the world.

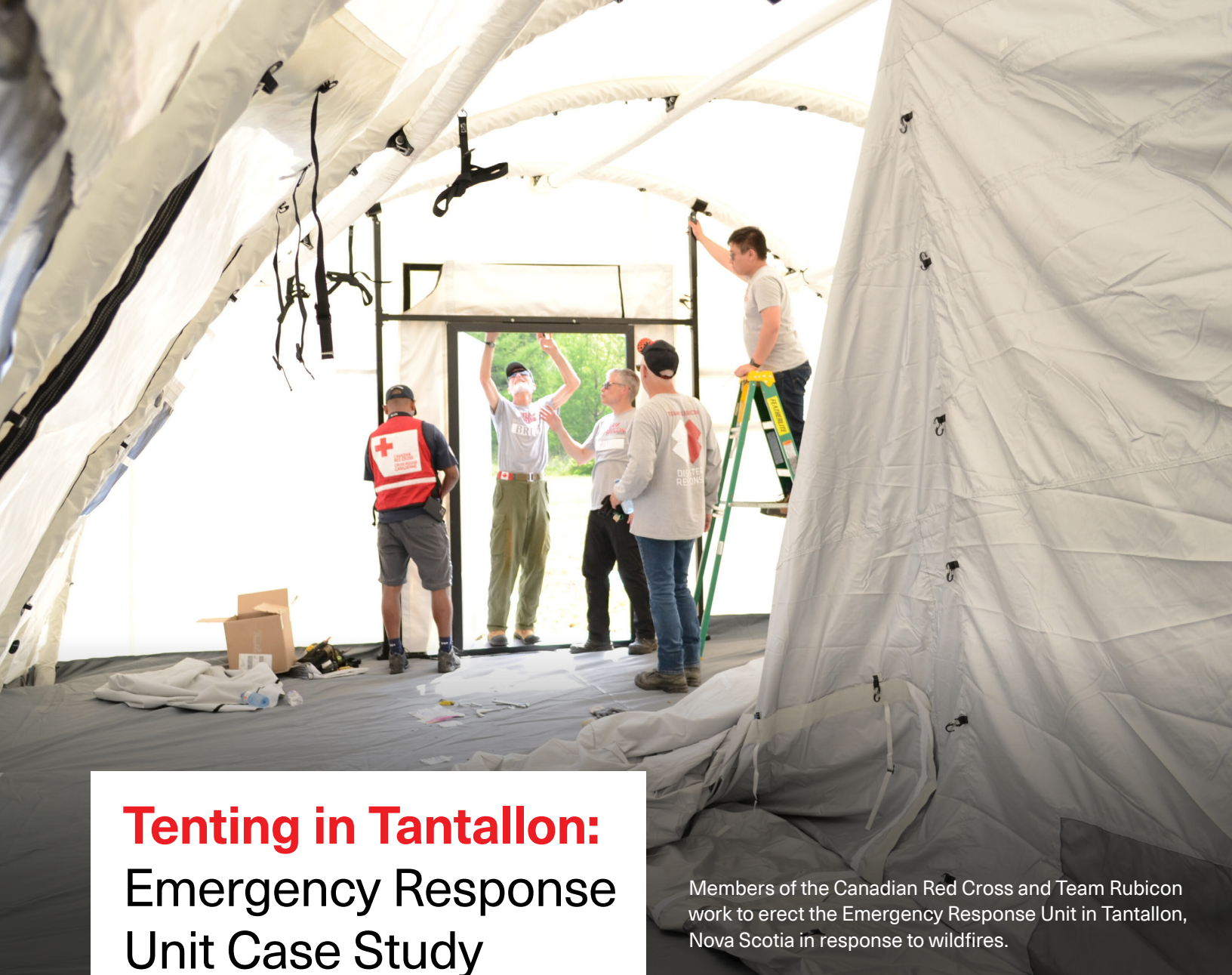
While originally used exclusively for international deployments to the scene of cyclones, earthquakes, and disease outbreaks, the ERU is being used more and more within Canada—[and your support has been vital.](#)

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the ERU was leveraged in multiple locations across the country to bolster the healthcare response.

Now, as new threats emerge such as extreme heat, severe storms, and seemingly never-ending wildfire seasons—all exacerbated by climate change—the ERU has become an integral tool in our domestic response capabilities.







## Tenting in Tantallon: Emergency Response Unit Case Study

Members of the Canadian Red Cross and Team Rubicon work to erect the Emergency Response Unit in Tantallon, Nova Scotia in response to wildfires.

After devastating wildfires swept through Tantallon, Nova Scotia, a suburb of Halifax, in late May and early June 2023, over 100 homes were left damaged or destroyed.

After supporting the thousands of people who were forced to evacuate with lodging, financial assistance, and relief items, the journey to recovery began.

The Canadian Red Cross partnered with Team Rubicon,

a non-profit focused on debris removal, ash-out and sifting services, to provide them with a Mobile Emergency Lodging ERU which was also used as an Incident Command Post, streamlining coordination efforts.

This helped Team Rubicon do what they do best: support families in their return home and preserve memories—sifting through the potentially hazardous debris and ash of homes to find keepsakes, heirlooms, and personal items.

This integrated support system was instrumental in enhancing Team Rubicon's response **efficiency and effectiveness**, demonstrating the empowering nature of the Canadian Red Cross' **collaborative approach** to disaster management.

# How you are creating the next generation of tools for **emergency response** in Canada

Your support for Time to Act has enhanced our readiness and contributed to the strategic deployment of the Emergency Response Unit in Canada.

**Here are some of the ways your support is innovating new ERU configurations to be ready for a changing Canada.**



## **Mobile Climate Control Hub:**

As climate change intensifies, extreme weather events are becoming increasingly common and severe in Canada. The Climate Control Hub is our response to these challenges, designed to **protect the health, safety, and dignity of those affected by heat, cold, and air quality emergencies**. This versatile unit can operate independently or enhance existing facilities, offering portability and flexibility for deployment across Canada. It provides cooling during heatwaves, warmth in extreme cold, and clean air during pollution events. Additionally, it serves as a welcoming centre, a child-friendly space, and a support hub for other emergency services.



## **Mobile Emergency Lodging (Basecamp):**

Mobile Emergency Lodging serves as a versatile shelter solution, capable of hosting staff, volunteers, and individuals displaced by emergencies such as floods or forest fires. This setup not only prevents local capacities from being overwhelmed but also augments the Red Cross' Emergency Lodging services. It can enhance existing facilities or operate independently, providing emergency accommodation for those in need. Furthermore, it **accommodates Red Cross personnel and partners, supporting the delivery of emergency social services** to affected communities.



## **Mobile Emergency Operations Centre (M-EOC):**

The Mobile Emergency Operations Centre serves as a comprehensive command post and field operations centre, providing a space for effective management and decision-making during emergencies or disasters. Especially useful when traditional building space is unavailable, it enables the Red Cross and other agencies to **establish a coordinated response swiftly and effectively, regardless of location**. This ensures our response teams can deliver coordinated and efficient emergency services.



## **Rapid Response Clinic:**

The Rapid Response Clinic is a first-line clinical response unit, offering services such as triage and consultations. While it doesn't have inpatient capacities, it's designed to alleviate strain on local health care resources following population movements, resource damage, or access issues. The clinic partners with local health authorities to provide primary health care, outbreak management, and other specified responses like testing, vaccination, and health promotion. It can be tented or set up in an available building, staffed by registered nurses, psycho-social support workers, and potentially primary care practitioners. **The clinic can serve 50 patients per day over an 8-hour period.**





## Time to Act for Jasper

Tiffany, Craig, and their new puppy Zizou, received aid from the Canadian Red Cross after being forced to evacuate from the wildfires in Jasper. Your support for Time to Act meant we could be there for people like Tiffany during their most challenging times.

"You always hear about other natural disasters, but you never think that you're going to be a part of it," said [Tiffany Toussaint](#), who was displaced with her partner from her home, along with an estimated 25,000 residents and visitors of Jasper, Alberta.

This past summer, ashes fell from the sky like snow as wildfires grew closer to Jasper. In endless lines of bumper-to-bumper traffic, thousands left their homes with the hope that they would be spared from the destruction of the flames. Unsure of their fate, exhausted and emotional, Tiffany and her partner, and hundreds of other people arrived at the doors of Canadian Red Cross-supported reception centres set up across the region.

After the fire tore through Jasper, nearly one-third of the town was destroyed, with many homes burnt down to the foundation. Throughout the response, the Canadian Red Cross provided support in six communities, ready to comfort and meet the needs of those evacuated as well as support them in their return to Jasper.

### **Two of these sites, one in Hinton and one in Jasper, were made possible because of your support.**

Our Emergency Response Unit—deployed with new configurations—was used for both sites to house a number of services, including financial assistance, cleaning supplies, utilities and insurance information, mental health supports, and child-friendly spaces for kids to play—and to be a gathering place for a community who had been through so much.

Tiffany was grateful for the Red Cross' support, remarking on how quickly the needs of evacuees were addressed and met. As she recalled, "[The Red Cross] was one step ahead of us to welcome us where we needed to be on the next step of our journey. It was surprising how quick you guys moved." At the Re-Entry Support Centre in Jasper, Tiffany and her partner were provided with cleaning supplies and financial assistance to purchase gas and toiletries to get them through this difficult time.

Thankfully, Tiffany's home was still standing after the wildfire.

Because of you, Jasperites like Tiffany had somewhere to go for **support and comfort** as they returned home.



## Thank you for standing with us

After an impactful start to the Time to Act campaign, we are deeply grateful for your generosity. Your support has been the catalyst to bring the Canadian Red Cross into a new period of innovation, enabling us to be there for Canadians before, during, and after emergencies through readiness, response, and resilience-building activities.

Thanks to you, we have strengthened our humanitarian workforce and enhanced our emergency readiness. Your contributions have allowed us to create new and practical ways to help communities in need across Canada and improved our organization across the board.

This makes you a critical part of every success story; every person given a safe and warm place to stay after losing their home, every family that has received financial assistance to get them through an evacuation, and every hug a volunteer has given to comfort someone in need. Without you, this work would not be possible.

We are grateful for your commitment to creating a safer and more prepared Canada.

**Together, we will continue to act to face tomorrow's challenges head on.**

THANK YOU



# *Act.*

**Thank you for acting for Canada**



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