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American Red Cross Builds Language Capacity With American Translators Association Partnership

WASHINGTON, DC – With the country having officially started a new hurricane season on June 1, the American Red Cross and the American Translators Association (ATA) today announced a partnership to increase language capacity throughout the Red Cross and enhance the organization’s ability to serve all communities.

Under this partnership, ATA, a professional association to advance the translation and interpreting professions, will recruit its members to serve as Red Cross volunteers. As professional interpreters, these volunteers will assist in Red Cross disaster operations by communicating with clients who do not speak English or who speak English as a second language.

“By partnering with ATA, the Red Cross is better prepared to serve diverse communities affected by both local and large-scale disasters,” said Mori Taheripour, Vice President of Corporate Diversity at the American Red Cross. “These types of partnerships are critical to the Red Cross. We need the help of our partners to improve our access to hard-to-reach communities, which will help us extend our lifesaving mission to all. I welcome ATA members to the Red Cross family and encourage each and every one of them to sign up to become Red Cross volunteers.”

"In times of crisis, when human communication can be a matter of life and death, ATA's interpreters will be on the front lines working hand-in-hand with the American Red Cross to support disaster relief efforts," said Marian S. Greenfield, President of ATA. "Through this partnership ATA will provide interpreting services for those seeking assistance when they need it most, enhancing the aid and comfort of those who have lost so much. ATA is looking forward to this important and far-reaching collaboration with the American Red Cross."

ATA members can register to participate via the ATA website at www.atanet.org/red_cross, in which case the Red Cross will match them with their local Red Cross chapters, or they can contact their local Red Cross chapter directly.

Participating volunteers will serve in various capacities according to their interests and qualifications. Some will serve locally as members of language banks or as Disaster Action Team (DAT) members, responding to local emergencies such as house fires, which are by far the

number one disaster in the country. Others will join the Red Cross as members of the Disaster Services Human Resources (DSHR) System, to be deployed in the event of a major disaster.

“In the event of a national disaster, ATA and the Red Cross are prepared to immediately implement the program,” points out Giovanna Lester, who headed the effort for ATA. ATA volunteers will report to their local chapter for training and deployment. In an emergency, ATA volunteers need only complete the Disaster Orientation to serve immediately as interpreters. In fact, several of the currently registered ATA volunteers have already completed Disaster Orientation training online. Remaining trainings can be completed later if volunteers wish to serve in additional Red Cross disaster relief roles.

To learn more about this particular program or to register to participate visit www.atanet.org/red_cross. The Red Cross is currently seeking volunteers, especially those who are bilingual. If you are interested in helping your community by volunteering your time and skill, contact your local chapter or visit www.redcross.org.

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The American Red Cross has helped people mobilize to help their neighbors for 125 years. Last year, victims of a record 72,883 disasters, most of them fires, turned to the nearly 1 million volunteers and 35,000 employees of the Red Cross for help and hope. Through more than 800 locally supported chapters, more than 15 million people each year gain the skills they need to prepare for and respond to emergencies in their homes, communities and world. Almost 4 million people give blood—the gift of life—through the Red Cross, making it the largest supplier of blood and blood products in the United States. The Red Cross helps thousands of U.S. service members separated from their families by military duty stay connected. As part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, a global network of more than 180 national societies, the Red Cross helps restore hope and dignity to the world's most vulnerable people. An average of 91 cents of every dollar the Red Cross spends is invested in humanitarian services and programs. The Red Cross is not a government agency; it relies on donations of time, money, and blood to do its work.

The American Translators Association (ATA), founded in 1959, is the largest professional association of translators and interpreters in the U.S. with over 9,500 members in over 70 countries. ATA's primary goals include fostering and supporting the professional development of translators and interpreters and promoting the translation and interpreting professions.