

## **MO AR April Storms**

### **Summary**

This analysis contains information from ten interviews of individuals that participated in DR535, MO AR April Storms (CAP\_Liaison\_DR535-25\_\*.docx, CAP\_Partner\_DR535-25\_\*.docx, CAP\_Staff\_DR535-25\_\*.docx, DRO\_Leadership\_DR535-25\_\*.docx, Region\_Staff\_DR535-25\_\*.docx, Community\_Stakeholder\_DR535-25\_\*.docx).

DR 535 was a level 5 tornado and flooding event. The region had experienced an ongoing period of elevated disaster activity (levels 4–6 since in March-April 2025). CAP engagement was most visible in Mississippi County, a small county of roughly 50,000 people. There, disaster impact was limited to modest flooding in Dyess, Arkansas, a town of 300 that did not meet Red Cross financial assistance thresholds, but CAP partners and a CAP liaison enabled faster damage assessment, distribution of emergency supplies, and feeding support.

CAP assisted the DRO in surge capacity, local reach, and trust-based engagement. CAP leveraged local partner resources and relationships during the disaster which resulted in operational benefits during disaster response including the acceleration of detection, delivery, culturally appropriate service provision and reduced centralized deployment burdens (“Whenever we found out that there was a need, you know, we jumped to action,” CAP Partner). However, the interviews also revealed constraints related to formal governance, quantification of cost savings, and consistent long-term sustainment.

Enabling factors include pre-incident convenings, CAP’s local staffing and leadership, and relationship-building, sustained local presence, and strong coalition leadership. The CAP team’s methods and expertise (community discovery and asset mapping, partnership development, resiliency hubs), and CAP’s approach to health, housing, and hunger partnerships were cited as enabling factors that are being replicated in other parts of the region. CAP investments materially strengthened community resilience: nonprofits received items including stoves, vent hoods, freezers, generators, vehicles, and a resilience center for charging, cooling/heating, and IT and communications connectivity. These assets improved everyday service delivery (food distribution, meals) and disaster capacity. (“What CAP program brought to this county has just been nothing short of a miracle,” CAP Partner).

In summary, CAP adds demonstrable value by building local relationships to improve the speed of response and improve preparedness, particularly in small hard to reach communities that might otherwise be missed by the operation. However, its scalability and cost efficiency depend on disaster scale, geographic context, clear integration and

deployment protocols, and proactive expectation and capacity building with partner organizations.

### **Quality**

Multiple CAP Staff and DRO Leadership interviews attribute earlier situational awareness and expedient activation—especially for feeding and DES—to CAP’s local presence and local municipal contacts (e.g., mayoral posts that routed residents to CAP contacts) (CAP Staff, Region Staff).

Where Red Cross DRO services could not immediately meet specific needs, the network stepped in to source items or long-term support, and many partner organizations continued services after initial Red Cross activity ended (“I could ask them and I know that it would, it would be done,” CAP Partner)

CAP was particularly important in reaching hard-to-reach communities, and in reducing immediate Red Cross staffing needs (DRO Leadership, Region and Chapter Staff). Examples include rapid identification of small towns (Dyess, Mammoth Springs) via mayors, social media posts, and community organizations, and partners providing doorstep deliveries to homebound elderly residents using CAP-funded vans (CAP Partner, CAP Liaison).

Feeding and culturally tailored meal provision were the most visible, high impact service modalities delivered by CAP partners. Multiple liaison and staff reports emphasize feeding as the dominant immediate response: CAP Liaison observed feeding as “a significant effort,” and CAP Staff framed partner-provided food as the “biggest success.” Local sourcing from familiar restaurants and local volunteers increased acceptability and uptake among hard-to-reach populations (CAP Liaison).

### **Speed**

Local partnerships and embedded liaisoning were primary mechanisms for rapid detection, community legitimacy, and faster service delivery. Interview data show CAP partners and local CAP staff acted as trusted intermediaries and “force multipliers”: because they were locally embedded and already operating day-to-day services, they provided immediate support—especially feeding, pantry kit distribution, water, hygiene supplies, and targeted health-related aid—that the Red Cross could not rapidly or cost-effectively replicate (Region Staff noted that partner teams “made sure it was handled” which freed up Red Cross staff to focus elsewhere).

Interviews consistently recounted day-of to 24-hour partner activation for feeding and DES, faster local damage assessment through cascaded training, and earlier reach into

communities that would likely have been delayed or missed by centralized deployments (CAP Staff, DRO Leadership, CAP Liaison).

### **Cost**

CAP partners supplied personnel, vehicles, and on the ground logistics that reduced the need for flown-in staff and centralized assets. Leadership accounts describe concrete offsets (DRO Leadership states CAP contributions allowed avoidance of costs and "food resources in the thousands" offsetting Red Cross feeding needs. Partners emphasized that the donated vehicles and box trucks increased per trip throughput and enabled last mile deliveries (CAP Partner and DRO Leadership). CAP partners also contributed localized knowledge that accelerated field operations and further reduced the need to surge external Red Cross personnel.

Although partner In-kind offsets were thought to have materially lowered short-term operational costs, stakeholders repeatedly acknowledged the absence of consistent accounting and standardized metrics to convert in-kind donations and volunteer hours into quantified ROI (Region and Chapter Staff, Region Staff), limiting formal cost effectiveness conclusions. Further, although multiple stakeholders reported significant qualitative cost savings from partner-provided meals, vehicles and volunteer labor (CAP Staff, DRO Leadership), they also acknowledged uncertainty about aggregate monetary savings in the context of the entire costs of the DRO: "I honestly don't... I don't think there was really much" (Region Staff). This may indicate strong operational value, but limited fiscal measurement. Similarly, although most saw the value of CAP reaching a hard-to-reach population, some interviewees felt that deployment of multiple Red Cross staffing resources to one small town may have been disproportionate to the scale of need (Region Staff). However, it was also acknowledged that Red Cross presence in hard- to-reach areas may have longer term benefits in terms of community acceptance and trust ("I think they were there. I think that was the most critical piece, they were in the community", DRO Leadership).

### **Scalability**

In the interviews, scalability was discussed on many different levels. Scalability of the existing program to large scale operations may be constrained by geography and the small local nonprofit base.

In general, scalability of the program across geographies and operations may be limited due to variable partner density, limits on partner capacity, and governance gaps. Several leadership and staff noted non-profit scarcity in some counties, reluctance to travel beyond local jurisdictions, and short-term surge ceilings, meaning that partners may not

be able to sustain high throughput beyond about a week or two (DRO Leadership, CAP Staff).

Replication may be more feasible where partner and partner networks are present, aligned and willing to provide mutual assistance. Multiple accounts noted that areas with no CAP partners or areas with access constraints (flooded roads, long distances), prevented comparable coverage than was provided in the CAP jurisdiction (Region Staff; Community Stakeholder). In sparsely populated rural areas, scale may require more targeted partner engagement, capability mapping and community investment.

### **Recommendations**

The interviews found that CAP achieved demonstrable operational gains in detection, culturally appropriate service delivery, and immediate cost offsets (feeding, transport, volunteers) in areas where it is well integrated (CAP Liaison, DRO Leadership). The interviewees recommended the following actions:

#### **Pre-disaster readiness**

- Hold regular partner forums, tabletop exercises, cascading training and asset mapping, all of which were found to have substantially improved role clarity, mobilization speed, and reduced duplication.
- Convene monthly coalition meetings and exercise-driven rehearsal – these factors that enabled partners to "know ahead of time what was expected" and to mobilize within 24 hours (CAP Staff, CAP Partner).

#### **Disaster Operations**

- Institutionalize liaison deployment norms favoring in-person, operationally experienced CAP liaisons and clear reporting lines (DRO Leadership).
- Build and maintain an up-to-date, searchable asset/capability map (Zengine or equivalent) with precleared partner rosters and simple readiness metrics so liaisons can "memorize" partner capabilities and activate the right actors immediately (CAP Liaison).
- Standardize and quantify partner offsets by introducing basic accounting protocols for in-kind donations, volunteer hours, vehicle use and days of service to estimate fiscal ROI and inform investment decisions (Region and Chapter Staff).
- Expand targeted training and rostering for damage assessment and other technical tasks via liaison-led cascade models to reduce reliance on flown-in teams and to improve timeliness (DRO Leadership; CAP Staff).
- Formalize simple coordination tools and a single publicized intake/needs hub per response (spreadsheets, chat documentation, centralized social media page) to

minimize duplication, avoid misdirected donations, and provide guaranteed backstops so partners do not feel sole responsibility for filling gaps (CAP Liaison; Community Stakeholder).

- Refine outreach language and feedback channels to make solicitations optional, reduce perceived partner liability, and create mid-response check-ins so partners can surface capacity constraints in real time (Region Staff).
- Incoming national disaster teams should routinely consult local officials and systematically ask affected local leaders to identify communities in need to prevent pockets of unmet need.

### **Scalability**

- Tailor strategies to the presence, alignment and mutual sharing arrangements of partner and partner networks in areas.
- Continue targeted investment in modest durable partner assets (vans, box trucks, etc.) (CAP Partner; DRO Leadership).
- Evaluate and compare across the CAP models (single county vs multiple county CAP “consultant” model, with clear and intentional logic models, objectives, implementation plans, metrics, and expectations to determine the degree to which each model meets stated organizational goals.

### **Evaluation limitations and caveats**

The summative evaluation rests primarily on qualitative, triangulated interviews, limiting numerical estimates and causal precision. Several respondents explicitly noted uncertainty about the dollar value of offsets (Region Staff, CAP Staff). Additionally, selection bias is possible: respondents were often engaged CAP actors or local partners whose perspectives may emphasize operational gains; counterfactual cases from non-CAP areas are described qualitatively but are not controlled comparisons.

### **Conclusion**

The Missouri–Arkansas April Storms (DR535-25) demonstrated that CAP added clear operational value by accelerating response, enabling culturally appropriate outreach, and reducing the need for centralized Red Cross deployments. In small, hard-to-reach communities like Dyess, AR, CAP, CAP partners and liaisons provided faster assessments, feeding, and supply delivery, leveraging trusted networks and donated assets to extend the reach of the DRO. However, gaps in cost tracking, variable partner capacity, and limited scalability in resource-scarce regions temper these successes. CAP’s effectiveness in DR535 points to the importance of institutionalizing liaison roles, strengthening readiness practices, and improving documentation so that its community-based strengths can be sustained and replicated across larger or more complex operations.

**Appendix 1: Sentiment Analysis**

<b>Theme</b>	<b>CAP Partner</b>	<b>CAP Staff</b>	<b>Region Chapter Staff</b>	<b>Community Stakeholder</b>	<b>DRO Leadership</b>	<b>CAP Liaison</b>
<b>Local Presence</b>	Very Positive	Positive	Very Positive	Very Positive	Very Positive	Very Positive
<b>Culturally Tailored Feeding</b>	Very Positive	Very Positive	Positive	Very Positive	Positive	Very Positive
<b>Asset and Logistical Contributions</b>	Very Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Very Positive
<b>Speed of Service Delivery</b>	Very Positive	Positive	Positive	Very Positive	Positive	Very Positive
<b>Community Engagement</b>	Very Positive	Positive	Positive	Very Positive	Very Positive	Very Positive
<b>Partner Coordination</b>	Positive	Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Positive	Positive
<b>Identifying and Reaching Vulnerable Populations</b>	Very Positive	Very Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive	Positive
<b>Integration and Collaboration</b>	Positive	Positive	Neutral	Neutral	Positive	Positive
<b>Preparedness and Training</b>	Positive	Very Positive	Positive	Neutral	Positive	Positive
<b>Quality of Service Delivery</b>	Very Positive	Positive	Positive	Very Positive	Positive	Very Positive
<b>Geographic Constraints</b>	Neutral	Negative	Negative	Neutral	Negative	Neutral

**Explanation of Sentiments:**

- **Very Positive:** Statements reflect strong support or approval.
- **Positive:** Sentiments are generally favorable but without the same degree of intensity.
- **Neutral:** Mixed feelings with no strong emotions conveyed.
- **Negative:** Concerns or issues are raised in the statements.
- **Very Negative:** Strong disapproval or negative sentiments are expressed.