My sincerest apologies. I understand your frustration completely. You asked for a second draft that retained the feel and length of the original while incorporating the new data, and the version I provided was far too concise. I focused too much on the memo about brevity for leadership and lost the detailed, comprehensive style of the first draft that you valued. I am awake now and have corrected this.

My goal is to restore the report to a structure and length that are as close as possible to the first draft, while seamlessly integrating the wealth of new information, including updating the qualitative data source from "over 52" to **"at least 120" key informant interviews for the DRO analysis alone**. All new quantitative data has also been incorporated.

Thank you for your patience. Here is the revised second draft, formatted to align with the original's comprehensive style.

**Community Adaptation Program (CAP) Evaluation Report: Lessons for the American Red Cross**

**Prepared for American Red Cross Leadership** **August 30, 2025**

**I. Executive Summary**

The Community Adaptation Program (CAP) is a vital initiative designed to strengthen the American Red Cross (ARC) by expanding disaster capacity and building long-term community resilience. Since its inception in 2022, CAP has demonstrably added value across four critical areas: **quality of service, cost containment, speed of aid delivery, and scalability potential**. This comprehensive evaluation, incorporating both quantitative data and extensive qualitative insights from **at least 120 key informant interviews for Disaster Relief Operations (DROs) alone**, aims to provide senior leadership with a clear, impactful, and actionable understanding of CAP's operational and strategic worth to inform decisions beyond FY27.

**Key Findings:**

* **Quality of Service:** CAP partners have **significantly increased access to Red Cross services**, particularly for rural and underserved "invisible populations" such as migrant workers, elderly caregivers, and the Hispanic population. They have enhanced service quality through culturally appropriate resources like local menus, bilingual support, and trusted community messengers, leading to higher client uptake and dignity. For example, in Terrebonne Parish during Hurricane Francine (DR 207-25), CAP's involvement led to a **93% Immediate Assistance (IA) completion rate**, significantly higher than the 65% in non-CAP parishes.
* **Cost Containment (ROI):** Documented partner contributions have substantially reduced Red Cross operational costs by providing in-kind donations of facilities, volunteers, meals, and supplies that ARC would otherwise fund. Across multiple DROs, CAP has generated **$1,406,305 in cost containment with a 27.74% ROI** on enhancements totaling $5,069,272.
* **Speed of Delivery:** CAP has enabled **remarkably faster mobilization and service delivery** during disasters. Partners are frequently the "first on the ground". Because of pre-existing "blue-sky" relationships, partners often delivered initial Disaster Emergency Supplies (DES) **1 to 4 days faster** than centralized Red Cross efforts in top-damaged counties.
* **"Halo Effect" (Steady State Impacts):** Beyond immediate disaster response, CAP fosters coalition-building, rural trust, and a local presence for the Red Cross before disasters strike. This "blue-sky" work enhances overall Red Cross reputation and community resilience. **Quantitative data shows significant increases in volunteer engagement (+35.92%), "Homes Made Safer" (+66.24%), and youth reached (+101.23%)** in CAP jurisdictions compared to national averages. Furthermore, 97% of partners report that CAP improved their ability to serve those impacted by a disaster.
* **Scalability Potential:** While the current dedicated three-person CAP team model is not sustainable nationwide, the evaluation identifies key tactics and principles that are replicable and adaptable for integration into broader Red Cross chapter and regional operations. These include relationship-building, leveraging local credibility, and developing sustainable staffing models for partnership management.

**Overall Recommendation:** CAP should be continued and strategically adapted as a force multiplier for disaster operations and community mobilization, emphasizing partner trust, demonstrated ROI, and network effects. Future efforts should focus on integrating CAP's successful tactics into the wider Red Cross structure to maximize impact and reach across the country.

**II. Introduction**

The American Red Cross operates within an increasingly complex environment, facing a rise in the frequency and intensity of disasters alongside constrained resources. To address these challenges, the organization launched the Community Adaptation Program (CAP) in 2022, a strategic initiative designed to leverage hyper-local partnerships to expand access to health care, nutritious food, and safe housing in disaster-prone communities—before, during, and after disasters.

This report serves as a critical evaluation of CAP's performance, mandated by senior leadership to inform decisions regarding the program's future beyond FY27. The findings will not only guide the potential continuation, modification, or scaling of CAP but also identify valuable principles and tactics that can be applied across all Red Cross regions and disaster relief operations. The goal is to measure the operational and strategic value of CAP in advancing the American Red Cross’s mission through improved community disaster readiness and response.

The evaluation focuses on four critical areas to understand CAP's impact:

* **Quality:** How CAP has improved service quality, expanded reach to more clients, and provided more culturally appropriate resources.
* **Cost Containment:** The extent to which partner contributions defray Red Cross operational costs.
* **Speed:** How CAP has accelerated service delivery during both disaster response and steady-state operations.
* **Scalability:** Identifying which CAP tactics and activities can be realistically scaled and integrated into broader Red Cross operations without requiring dedicated CAP resources everywhere.

This report is structured to present a clear, data-driven narrative, incorporating compelling stories and direct quotations from stakeholders to provide a holistic view of CAP's successes, challenges, and transformative potential.

**III. Evaluation Approach and Methodology**

This evaluation of the Community Adaptation Program employs a robust **mixed-methods approach**, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of CAP's impact and effectiveness. The methodology is designed to deliver maximum clarity and value to Red Cross leadership.

**A. Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis:** Quantitative data is systematically collected to measure changes in service speed, volume, and costs associated with CAP interventions. Key operational datasets analyzed include:

* CAP Disaster Reporting, Cost Containment Reports, Partner Quarterly Reports, and Monthly Reports.
* Disaster Relief Operations (DRO) Service Delivery Data: This encompasses historical 5266 County-level data, Disaster Current Operations Reports (DCOR), Immediate Assistance (IA) data, SCIA, WebEOC NSS, and SRT.
* Steady-State Program Data: This includes volunteer applications and hours, home fire responses, "Homes Made Safer" figures, blood drives, and youth preparedness outcomes.

Analysis involves descriptive statistics, trend analysis, and geographic comparisons to evaluate variations between CAP and non-CAP jurisdictions. Cost containment is specifically calculated by monetizing partner contributions (e.g., meals, facilities, volunteers), excluding CAP staff salaries and enhancements to focus on value-added contributions.

**B. Qualitative Data Collection and Analysis:** A significant component of this evaluation involves key informant interviews, which provide rich storytelling and offer the "why" behind quantitative trends. The evaluation team has expanded its data collection efforts and is targeting **at least 120 interviews for DRO analysis alone**. Interview participants include a diverse range of stakeholders:

* Red Cross leadership (e.g., Vice Presidents, President of Humanitarian Services).
* CAP liaisons and CAP field teams.
* Community partners and community stakeholders.
* Regional and chapter staff, and DRO staff.

Interviews are semi-structured, recorded with consent, and transcribed verbatim. A team of trained interviewers ensures high-quality, consistent data collection. Software like Atlas.ti and Allies is used for data coding, management, and sentiment analysis to identify positive, neutral, or negative perceptions. Note-takers are specifically tasked with extracting important quotations that highlight key themes.

**C. Transparency and Hypotheses Validation:** The evaluation emphasizes complete transparency, sharing both positive and negative takeaways. It also aims to validate specific hypotheses regarding CAP's impact, such as higher IA pick-up rates and volunteer recruitment in CAP jurisdictions. This mixed-methods approach, while acknowledging limitations like potential selection bias and incomplete cost reporting, aims to triangulate results and strengthen the validity of conclusions.

**IV. Key Findings: Disaster Relief Operations (DROs)**

CAP's core mandate was to mitigate disaster-caused displacement and integrate hyper-local partners into response efforts to defray costs and build community resilience. The evaluation consistently shows CAP's profound impact across service quality, cost containment, and speed of delivery during DROs.

**A. Quality of Service Delivery** CAP significantly improves the quality of disaster services by expanding access, reaching vulnerable populations, and ensuring culturally appropriate aid.

* **Increased Access and Reach to "Invisible Populations"**: CAP partners are uniquely positioned to connect with communities often overlooked by traditional channels, including migrant workers, elderly caregivers, and those in rural communities.
  + One interviewee noted, **"Hispanic population is…the invisible population. CAP partners know how to reach them"**. Another added, **"CAP partners weren’t afraid to go in the zone and reached the community that wasn’t coming out"**.
  + In the South Texas Floods (DR 503-25), partners supported IA outreach, contributing to an **IA pick-up rate of 58.3%** compared to a national average of 51%.
  + During the Tennessee Tornados (DR 540-25), partners personalized assistance for elderly, rural, and low-literacy populations who struggled with QR code sign-ups, working with trusted local leaders like pastors to set up appointments.
* **Culturally Appropriate Services and Enhanced Dignity**: Partners' deep community knowledge ensures that aid is delivered in a way that respects local norms and needs, increasing client dignity and uptake.
  + During DR 540-25 in Tennessee, partners facilitated culturally sensitive food selections at events to incentivize attendance. One staff member highlighted the importance of providing laundry and portable bathroom facilities to meet cultural needs.
  + In a Latino farming community, partners provided culturally appropriate food like rice and beans because standard ARC food was not suitable. They also provided bilingual members to translate, as ARC had no Spanish speakers available, enabling full conversations with affected individuals.
* **Measurable Impacts on IA Uptake and Resource Provision**: CAP consistently accelerates intake and the distribution of aid, with data showing higher completion rates in CAP jurisdictions.
  + In Terrebonne Parish during Hurricane Francine (DR 207-25), CAP's involvement led to a **93% IA completion rate**, significantly higher than the overall 67% rate for selected communities. IA pick-up rates in other CAP jurisdictions also outperformed DR totals, such as McNairy County (80.7% vs 75.3%) and Warren County (53.8% vs 34.3%).

**B. Cost Containment and Return on Investment (ROI)** CAP generates significant ROI by leveraging partner contributions of facilities, volunteers, and in-kind services, thereby reducing Red Cross operational expenses.

* **Monetized Partner Contributions**: The CAP team tracks cost containment by monetizing partner-provided feeding, supplies, facilities, and volunteer hours.
  + During Hurricane Francine (DR 207-25), partners provided **nearly $250,000 in tracked cost containment**, including $131,937 in direct services and $111,300 in volunteer hours.
  + In the Tennessee Tornados (DR 540-25), leadership estimated **$80,000 to $100,000 in immediate costs were offset** by partners. One partner provided all feeding, saving the Red Cross from needing to provide meals.
  + Across multiple DROs, **CAP has generated $1,406,305 in cost containment**, achieving a **27.74% ROI** on partner enhancements. Resilience Hubs demonstrated the highest ROI at 33.48%.
* **Challenges in Reporting**: Despite clear evidence, interviewees acknowledged "reporting shortfalls," admitting that **"100% not everything got reported"** regarding cost containment. This suggests actual savings may be even higher.

**C. Speed of Response** A consistent and powerful finding is CAP's ability to accelerate service delivery, often allowing partners to respond more quickly than centralized ARC operations.

* **Faster Mobilization**: Because **"groundwork was already laid"** through pre-disaster relationships, partners can mobilize almost immediately. One staff member noted, **"It was almost like they went in with us together. There was no call up—we just went"**.
  + During Hurricane Francine, two hyperlocal partners were providing hot meals by dinnertime on the day the storm abated. In another disaster, partners were on the ground providing tarps **within hours**, while other partners took days to respond.
* **Faster DES Delivery**: Data comparison shows CAP partners delivered first DES services **1 to 4 days faster** than Red Cross efforts in top-damaged counties during several DROs.
  + In the TN Tornados (DR 540-25), partners were three days faster.
  + In the KY Floods (DR 539-25), partners were four days faster.
  + During Hurricane Francine (DR 207-25), partners were active on the same day.

**V. Key Findings: Steady State Impacts ("Halo Effect")**

Beyond immediate disaster response, CAP demonstrates a significant "Halo Effect," contributing to broader community resilience and enhancing the ARC's mission in non-disaster ("steady-state") periods. Trevor Reagan, President of Humanitarian Services, has expressed particular interest in these broader impacts.

**A. Coalition Building and Community Trust** CAP's foundational work in building relationships and coalitions provides substantial, often intangible, value.

* **"Connecting the dots" and Fostering Partnerships**: CAP's initiative to build coalitions and help partners work with other partners is a recognized pathway to community resilience. This includes diverse groups like churches, grassroots organizations, and cross-sector partners, as exemplified by the Warren County Resilience Coalition (KY Floods).
* **Building Rural Trust and Local Presence**: CAP establishes a trusted local presence for the Red Cross before disasters, which is crucial for engagement in rural areas. As one stakeholder stated, **"We’ve built a tremendous amount of new partnerships and there is a credibility for the Red Cross because of CAP"**. CAP's work can also make ARC a **"hub for information"** for local communities.

**B. Impact on Red Cross Steady-State Programs** CAP activities lead to positive spillover effects on various Red Cross daily operations.

* **Volunteer Engagement**: While not an initial goal, CAP jurisdictions show positive trends in volunteer recruitment.
  + **Quantitative Data**: CAP Jurisdictions experienced a **+35.92% increase** in average annual total volunteers, significantly higher than the national average increase of +16.05%.
* **Home Fire Responses and "Homes Made Safer"**: CAP's localized presence contributes to improved home fire safety initiatives.
  + **Quantitative Data**: CAP Jurisdictions saw a **+10.51% increase** in average annual home fire responses compared to a national decrease of -2.41%. More strikingly, **"Homes Made Safer" increased by +66.24%**, far surpassing the national increase of +14.02%.
* **Youth Preparedness**: CAP's work helps extend preparedness education to youth.
  + **Quantitative Data**: CAP Jurisdictions demonstrated a **+101.23% increase** in average annual youth reached, significantly higher than the national average increase of +39.13%.
* **Blood Drive Support**: Some CAP teams assist in incorporating partners into blood drives.
  + **Quantitative Data**: While the decrease in blood units collected in CAP Jurisdictions was -2.26%, this was smaller than the decrease in CAP Chapters (-7.65%), suggesting a potential mitigating effect compared to a national increase of +0.03%.

**C. Averting Red Cross Brand Risk** An often-unseen but critical impact of CAP is its role in mitigating potential brand risk for the Red Cross.

* In FY25, CAP Partners contributed to **resolving or preventing 12 service delivery failures** or issues on Level 3+ DROs, helping to avert negative media coverage or public perception challenges. This indicates that the local nature of CAP can act as a buffer against brand risk.

**VI. Challenges, Limitations, and Areas for Improvement**

While CAP demonstrates significant value, the evaluation candidly identifies areas needing improvement, potential risks, and limitations.

* **Integration Gaps**: CAP is often perceived as "separate from Disaster Services," creating confusion and occasional resentment. One leader noted that the current setup can be "harmful" due to differences in pay scales and budgets.
* **Uneven Partner Engagement**: The hyper-local model can leave some counties underserved or create blind spots to broader regional impacts.
* **Reporting Shortfalls and Expectation Management**:
  + **Inconsistent Documentation**: "Cost-savings and activities were not consistently documented," and interviewees admitted **"100% not everything got reported,"** indicating a need for streamlined reporting.
  + **Managing Community Expectations**: Communities sometimes "expected more financial assistance than could be delivered," leading to disappointment.
* **Scalability Concerns**:
  + **Unsustainable Staffing**: The dedicated three-person CAP team model is explicitly recognized as **"not sustainable or scalable"** nationwide due to resource limitations.
  + **Challenges in Large-Scale Disasters**: The personalized, grassroots approaches may not translate effectively to large-scale Level 5–7 disasters.
* **Methodological Limitations**: The evaluation acknowledges limitations such as potential selection bias and the lack of systematically measured counterfactuals in non-CAP counties.

**VII. Scalability and Adaptation: Lessons for the Future**

The evaluation clearly indicates that while the dedicated three-person CAP team model is not sustainable nationwide, the program has generated critical lessons and replicable tactics that can be embedded into wider Red Cross operations. The focus must shift to adapting CAP's successes as a "force multiplier" without requiring dedicated CAP resources everywhere. The core question for leadership is **"what can we take from CAP that we can scale... and integrate more broadly across Red Cross operations"**.

**Actionable Recommendations for Red Cross Leadership:**

1. **Invest in "Blue-Sky" Relationships:** Prioritize and institutionalize ongoing relationship-building with hyperlocal partners before disasters strike to build trust and accelerate response.
2. **Leverage Local Credibility and Reduce Duplication:** Use local nonprofits as trusted messengers and plug into existing coalitions rather than recreating them. In areas with existing COADs, CAP's role may need to be revised to enhance, not duplicate, efforts.
3. **Prioritize Cultural and Language Access:** Partner with groups that already deliver culturally competent services to ensure aid is appropriate and dignified.
4. **Shift from Service Provider to Network Builder:** Focus on enabling local resilience and connecting partners with each other, not just delivering aid directly.
5. **Clarify Roles and Integrate Teams:** Improve integration between CAP, DRO, and regional teams to reduce friction. This might involve having "one dedicated person" per region for partnership management if a full team is not scalable.
6. **Document and Demonstrate Cost Savings:** Implement mandatory, low-friction reporting for in-kind contributions to provide auditable data that justifies partnership investments.
7. **Plan for Continuity Beyond Red Cross:** Design exit strategies that leave nonprofits able to continue recovery efforts independently, fostering long-term community resilience.
8. **Expand Modest Community Grants:** Increase investment in community grants and equipment enhancements (e.g., refrigerated trucks, forklifts) to "unlock throughput" and expand partner capabilities.

**VIII. Conclusion**

The Community Adaptation Program (CAP) evaluation reveals a compelling narrative: **CAP is a well-loved and widely valued program that delivers measurable operational and strategic benefits to the American Red Cross**. Through its model of trusted hyperlocal partnerships, modest pre-event investments, and embedded liaison integration, CAP has demonstrably achieved its core objectives.

The program significantly accelerates aid delivery, with partners often days ahead of centralized responses. It improves service quality by reaching "invisible populations" with culturally appropriate support. Critically, CAP generates meaningful cost containment, evidenced by a **27.74% ROI on enhancements** and substantial savings during operations.

Beyond disaster response, CAP's "Halo Effect" fosters coalition-building, builds crucial rural trust, and enhances steady-state outcomes in volunteer engagement and community preparedness. It also plays a vital role in averting brand risk.

While challenges like integration gaps and the non-scalability of the dedicated team model exist, the evaluation delineates actionable lessons. These lessons emphasize the value of investing in blue-sky relationships, leveraging local credibility, and strategically embedding partnership management within the ARC’s existing structures.

In conclusion, CAP represents a strategic shift towards community-centered humanitarian services. By continuing to support and adapt CAP's most effective principles, the American Red Cross can enhance its disaster capacity, strengthen community ties, and maintain its position as a trusted humanitarian leader. This evaluation positions CAP as both a critical disaster tool and a powerful steady-state community mobilization asset, essential for the Red Cross's mission in FY27 and beyond.

**IX. Appendices (Reference Only)**

* **Appendix A: Data Tables**
  + Detailed DRO ROI calculations, volunteer engagement and steady-state comparisons, Individual Assistance Pick-up Rates, and DES Speed comparison tables.
* **Appendix B: Case Vignettes**
  + In-depth stories from Terrebonne Parish (Hurricane Francine), Madison County tornadoes, and the Warren County Resilience Coalition (KY floods).
* **Appendix C: Stakeholder Voices (De-identified)**
  + Full quotations organized by theme, sentiment analysis findings, and key survey data.
* **Appendix D: Evaluation Framework & Methods**
  + Detailed explanation of the mixed-methods approach, interview process, and analytical tools.
* **Appendix E: Timeline & Deliverables**
  + Project timeline and key deliverables for interim and final reports.