



American Red Cross

CASE STUDY: AMERICAN RED CROSS

STAYING SAFE WHILE LENDING A HELPING HAND

Disaster Services

A humanitarian organization ensures employee safety while delivering its lifesaving services

Scattered across 50 regions in 1,500 facilities, 20,000 American Red Cross employees and 200,000 volunteers work daily to make good on the organization's lifesaving mission. But for those dedicated Samaritans to successfully deliver those critical services, the Red Cross organization needs to ensure them a safe and secure working environment—which can be a tall order.

Sensitive to how they spend donor dollars and wanting proximity to the people in need they serve, Red Cross facilities aren't typically located in high-end neighborhoods. "Crime happens at our sites; were not always in the best locations," explained Michael Fessler, the organization's Senior Director for Enterprise Security Services.

Compounding the organization's protection challenge has been a substantial churn in its real estate portfolio. Just over five years ago, it moved away from a mostly autonomous regional franchise model to a centralized structure, a move accompanied by the merging, closing, and opening of American Red Cross offices.

TAKING SECURITY SERIOUSLY

As part of its re-branding, the organization replaced local responsibility for security with a consolidated approach and the naming of Fessler as its first-ever enterprise-wide director of security. "The scope is immense," Fessler acknowledged. "We looked at where we could consolidate offices, what to sell, what do we need to buy, where can we merge—it was a lot of buying and selling that required recommendations."

Based in Washington DC, Fessler already understood the security risks to its national headquarters and surrounding properties. He knew the area first-hand, had friends in local law enforcement, and scored regular insight from contacts at government agencies. But now that understanding had to somehow expand nationwide. The organization needed a reliable and objective tool to understand and compare the risks of properties and locations.

Ensuring a safe and secure working environment for:

50
REGIONS

1,500
FACILITIES

20,000
AMERICAN RED CROSS
EMPLOYEES

200,000
VOLUNTEERS WORK DAILY

"We identified our 10 least-safe properties and worked to improve their security level. Once we updated security at those 10, we moved onto the next 10."

CORNERSTONE TO SUCCESS

To raise the level of protection at its most vulnerable facilities and for insight into where Red Cross could safely locate its personnel, Fessler says he relies heavily on CRIMECAST Reports from CAP Index. “We started with ordering a few one-off reports but found them much more reliable than crime data and easy to use and understand,” he said. “The more I used it, the more I liked it—and in 2018 we signed on as a partner.”

Fessler says they’ve successfully used CAP Index to gradually raise the floor of the organization’s security. “We identified our 10 least-safe properties and worked to improve their security level. Once we updated security at those 10, we moved onto the next 10.”

That success gave rise to a more ambitious effort to optimize security resources across regions by assigning properties with a low, medium, or elevated risk status and then implementing security measures to match. “I don’t put all my eggs in one basket. I consult colleagues and contacts; I use local police department crime mapping services; but it all starts with CAP Index CRIMECAST Reports,” Fessler said. “It’s proved dependable and has given us buy-in from senior leadership. It’s primarily what we rely upon.”

The reports also proved critical for assisting with property acquisition and decision-making, Fessler says, by helping to compare locations and identify where it could safely locate operations.

THE SOLUTION

In the case of its midtown New York City office, the organization faced a multi-million-dollar decision to sell or remodel and stay. While its CAP Index score was high in a national comparison, Fessler supplied management with the proof it needed to feel confident in the decision to stay. “In explaining the city averages, we showed them that—if it’s important to be in New York City—then this was an extremely safe location to be and to invest in some improvements.”

Enterprise risk management offers a real value proposition for American Red Cross, and CAP Index CRIMECAST Reports provide the foundation for its assessment of risks, according to Fessler. “It’s not the sole determination, but it provides a starting point that is validated and saves me a tremendous amount of time,” he said.

“We started with ordering a few one-off reports but found them much more reliable than crime data and easy to use and understand. The more I used it, the more I liked it—and in 2018 we signed on as a partner.”

“It’s [CAP Index] proved dependable and has given us buy-in from senior leadership. It’s primarily what we rely upon.”

CONTACT CAP INDEX

Website: capindex.com

Phone: (610) 903-3000

Email: askcap@capindex.com

