

Center for Strategic Partnerships



2025 WILDFIRES:

LA County and partners join forces to provide for residents' immediate needs

“Our communities are still reeling from the devastation of recent wildfires, and we have a collective responsibility to make sure they are supported every step of the way in the recovery process.”

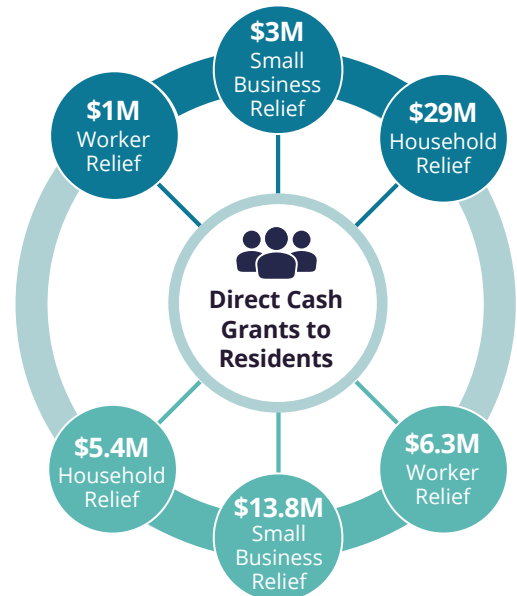
— Supervisor Kathryn Barger, LA County, Fifth District

Moments of crisis often show us who we really are, as individuals *and* as a community. In January 2025, a rare outbreak of unseasonal wildfires tore through Los Angeles County. Two of the fires, the Palisades and Eaton/Altadena, rank among the most destructive in California history.

Full recovery will require years of coordinated effort. In the meantime, with payments from FEMA and private insurance months away, residents and small businesses needed immediate help. No single sector of the community was able to meet all the needs.

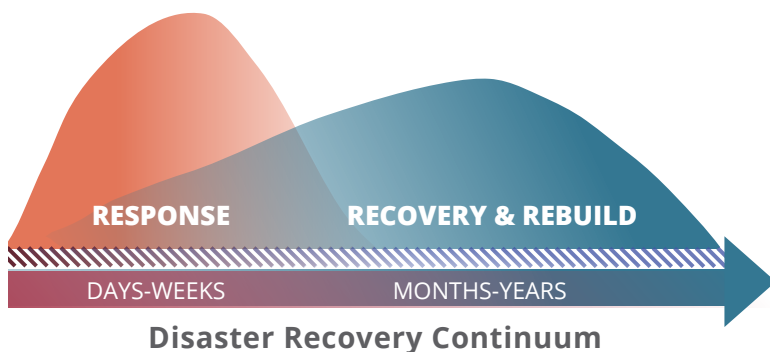
Luckily, LA County is no stranger to a team approach. For nearly 10 years, its Center for Strategic Partnerships has been facilitating joint initiatives among County departments and philanthropic partners to weather crises, solve problems, improve public systems, and better serve the community. Strong teamwork has enabled the County to organize a quick, coordinated, and multifaceted response while laying the groundwork for recovery efforts still to come.

LA COUNTY & PRIVATE FUNDING WORKING TOGETHER (JAN-APRIL 2025)



“In the wake of wildfire, LA County has stayed focused on meeting people where they are — partnering with philanthropy to deliver coordinated, compassionate support. Recovery is about restoring the whole of community and building hope for the future.”

— Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath, LA County, Third District



THE TOLL OF THE LA WILDFIRES



31
LIVES
LOST



16,000+
STRUCTURES
DESTROYED



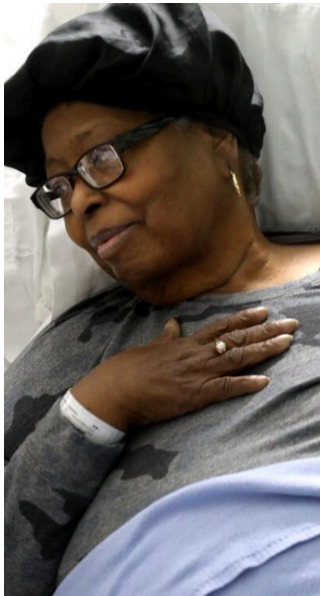
200K+
RESIDENTS
FORCED TO FLEE



\$100 BILLION+
IN EXPECTED LOSSES

IMMEDIATE AID FOR VULNERABLE DISPLACED RESIDENTS

Displaced families, elders, and people with disabilities lost more than shelter and belongings; they lost essential care, connections, and community. County departments stepped up quickly to meet residents' immediate needs and continue to walk alongside them as they navigate the long road to healing and recovery.



The Department of Aging and Disabilities collaborated with more than **50 wildfire relief partners**, including County departments, foundations, and CBOs, to:

- Conduct outreach calls and connect displaced older adults with recovery resources
- Support clients with FEMA applications and other case management needs
- Provide grief and trauma support *(with the Department of Mental Health)*
- Offer legal aid and document recovery *(Bet Tzedek)*
- Relocate Altadena Senior Center members *(Parks & Recreation and Library)*



6K+ Staff hours dedicated to wildfire emergencies



157K+ Pounds of food pantry items distributed



13K+ Wellness calls made to impacted residents

The Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) teamed up with **Lendistry** and the **Center for Strategic Economic Studies and Institutional Development, Inc.** to quickly get direct cash grants to impacted households. These grants helped cover rent, replacement of essential items, and other immediate living expenses. DCBA is protecting County residents from exploitation through tenant guidance and warnings about government imposters, home repair scams, and price gouging.

HOUSEHOLD RELIEF GRANTS

\$34.4M in direct cash grants to impacted households

15,000+ applications for the grants program received

\$6K-\$18K range of grants awarded to residents



Standing up the Household Relief Grant within 28 days and delivering \$31 million in direct aid to wildfire survivors was only possible through DCBA's collaboration with our nonprofit partner. Together, we swiftly got funds into the hands of the most vulnerable and severely impacted, helping to meet urgent needs while long-term aid was still on the way." — Rafael Carbajal, Director, Department of Consumer and Business Affairs



Partnerships happen at the speed of trust. The Center has spent nearly a decade building trust between the County and philanthropy and it showed.” — **Kate Anderson, Director, Center for Strategic Partnerships**

Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) secured \$2.4M from **FireAid*** and collaborated with **80+ partners** to restore joy and play for children in Los Angeles.

**FireAid is a philanthropic recovery fund to support wildfire relief in Los Angeles. It reflects the County’s commitment to mobilizing innovative partnerships and community-driven resources in times of crisis.*

\$2.4M INVESTED IN CHILDREN in fire-affected communities through:



ESTEAM CAMPS

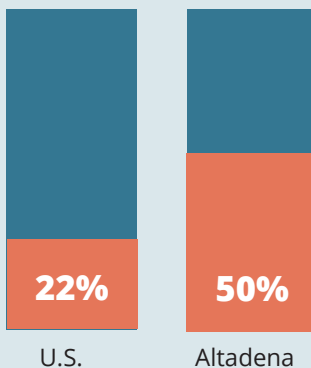
- Trauma-informed healing camps
- Focused on Eaton fire area
- Free programs at Loma Alta and Arcadia Parks
- In partnership with the Dept. of Economic Opportunity

LA CARES CAMPS

- Arts & emotional healing camps
- 2,700 youth served
- 5 sites across LA
- In partnership with the Dept. of Arts & Culture



Percentage of fire damaged properties/lots purchased by Corporations & Developers
(National Average vs. Altadena)



As many low- and moderate-income homeowners wrestle with the difficult choice between selling or rebuilding, the **Altadena Coalition** offers counseling, financing, and other supports for those who stay. The coalition is addressing concerns about community displacement with plans to purchase properties for sale and hold them in trust, ensuring a recovery that preserves the area’s diversity and cultural significance.

The coalition comprises nearly 100 cross-sector partners, including:

- Leadership by **Neighborhood Housing Services**
- Critical support from **LA County Board of Supervisors Chair** and Altadena representative **Kathryn Barger**
- Technical assistance from the **Center for Strategic Partnerships**

The State of California and **City and County of LA** are teaming up to streamline the permitting process for property owners through the use of AI. A new software tool, **Archistar**, allows owners to pre-check their plans against local zoning and building codes before submission, improving transparency and potentially shaving weeks (or even months) from review times.



PHILANTHROPIC PARTNERS will cover user fees for up to **12,000** LA RESIDENTS



To help boost local progress, California is partnering with the tech sector and community leaders to give local governments more tools to rebuild faster and more effectively.” — **Governor Gavin Newsom**

“When the wildfires hit, our existing relationships with City and County partners, Southern California Grantmakers, and a network of job and business centers and providers enabled us to show up powerfully for local workers and businesses. We are committed to supporting a sustainable recovery that will maintain and increase economic mobility for Los Angeles residents.”

— Kelly LoBianco, Director, Department of Economic Opportunity

OFFSETTING WAGE LOSS AND HELPING SMALL BUSINESSES REBUILD

The wildfires devastated jobs and small businesses including local coffee hangouts, food trucks, and independent retail shops that give LA neighborhoods their distinct character and provide vital jobs. To meet this urgent need, the **Department of Economic Opportunity** (DEO) acted quickly to stabilize livelihoods and help communities rebuild.

DEO launched the **LA Region Small Business** and **Worker Relief Fund** that delivered assistance in 14 threshold languages through 40+ partner organizations and 100+ trained staff.

Recovery support extended beyond grants:



\$32M for workforce initiatives including rapid reemployment & skills training to support workers who lost income due to the fires.



The Space Share, a Business to Business portal helps displaced businesses find temporary working spaces.



Together for LA, a cross-sector alliance, offers access to webinars, technical assistance, legal help, and other recovery resources.



IMMEDIATE FIRE RELIEF

(Raised in the First 30 Days by the DEO)

\$19M+ Immediately raised for fire relief

1,400 DIRECT CASH GRANTS to small businesses

2,000+ WORKERS wages offset for losses



Department of Arts and Culture contributed \$807,500 in FireAid funds to the DEO, which provided direct cash relief to artists and creative workers, affirming the County's recognition of the arts as an essential part of economic and community healing. These funds helped integrate the creative workforce into the broader recovery strategy and included:

- Documenting the wildfire's impact on local artists and arts organizations, including lost studios and workplaces, income, and revenues, to support recovery planning
- Providing free temporary storage for artwork on behalf of local artists and arts organizations
- Equipping artists with kits and skills to support preservation and cleaning of damaged works (*with Your Neighborhood Museum and Arts Recovery LA*)

The Department of Aging and Disabilities is partnering with the State Legislature to ensure care providers stay employed and continue to provide their essential services to vulnerable residents during times of crisis. If passed, the measure will increase coordination and communication among aging and disability service agencies and help provide residents in emergency shelters with care when they need it most.





Arts and culture are not just for artists. They are expressions of identity, creativity, and community—shaping public spaces, inspiring innovation, and offering healing in times of crisis. This community includes youth, musicians, community arts centers, funders, libraries, museums, and arts workers, many of whom experienced significant disruption and loss. We remain committed to supporting their recovery to continue their vital contributions to our cultural life.”

— Kristin Sakoda, Director, Department of Arts and Culture

REBUILDING SPACES FOR CULTURE, COMMUNITY, AND HEALING

A community’s public parks, community centers, historic landmarks, and cultural assets promote health, foster belonging, and help preserve community ties. In damaging these spaces, the wildfires threatened many Angelenos’ ability to both express their unique identities and come together around common interests.

The **Department of Parks and Recreation** (DPR) mobilized swiftly in collaboration with philanthropic, private, and County departments to restore hiking paths, wildlife habitat, and recreational equipment lost or severely damaged by the fires. In Altadena—where parks serve as essential public gathering spaces for the community—DPR led recovery efforts across multiple sites:



Loma Alta Park reopened in May 2025. It includes a site for the 900 community members displaced by the loss of the Altadena Senior Center to regain normalcy, combat isolation, and address mobility and medical needs while the community center is being rebuilt (with the Department of Aging and Disabilities).

Charles White Park is undergoing a transformation slated for completion in 2026. The project includes a modern replacement playground and a new community center building—designed to welcome residents of all ages back into a safe and inclusive space.

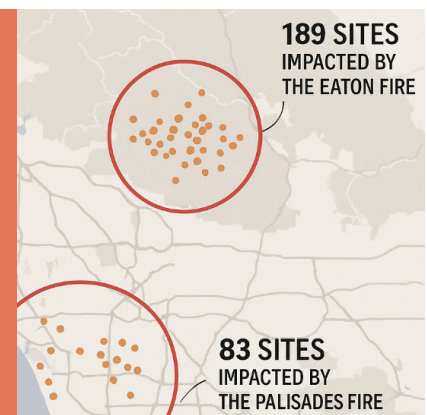
Additional impacted parks such as **Farnsworth Park** and **Millard Canyon Trailhead** are part of ongoing restoration efforts, with priorities including the reopening of trails, removal of fire debris, replanting of native habitat, and repair of recreation infrastructure to ensure safe access for the public.

The **Department of Arts and Culture** (DAC) is assessing damage to the County’s Civic Art Collection and has partnered with Smithsonian Cultural Rescue Initiative to identify damaged cultural heritage sites.

DAC is also leveraging the County’s Creative Wellbeing initiative, art healing centers, and partnerships with the Department of Parks and Recreation and Pasadena School District to provide healing activities in community spaces for impacted youth and caregivers.

FIRE DAMAGE TO CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES

*Rapid Impact Assessment
conducted by the DAC &
the Smithsonian Cultural
Rescue Initiative*



The loss of parks during the wildfires disrupted essential spaces for play, community well-being, and access to nature. We were tasked with how to rebuild our most invaluable community resource, our parks, while also caring for the communities that frequented them.”

— Norma García-González, Director, Department of Parks and Recreation



LA WILDFIRE RECOVERY FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE

Even before the wildfires were contained, leaders from the County's **Center for Strategic Partnerships**, the **City of LA Office of Strategic Partnerships**, and the **Annenberg Foundation** began discussing philanthropy's role in relief and recovery. Drawing on past disaster efforts, they recognized the need to coordinate across sectors for maximum impact.

The **LA Wildfire Recovery Funders Collaborative** ("Collaborative") was formed as a shared space for funders to learn together, align priorities, and coordinate support. Co-led by the **Center for Strategic Partnerships** and **SoCal Grantmakers**, the Collaborative engages approximately 50 cross-sector partners represented by government and philanthropy. As recovery continues, it remains a hub for strategy, coordination, and long-term equity-focused solutions.

CONCLUSION

During the critical first few months of wildfires response, the County and its partners leapt into action quickly to mitigate the worst impacts of the crisis and provide immediate relief.

There is still a long road ahead—full recovery from an event of this magnitude can take a decade or longer. The partnerships celebrated here are now beginning the work of thinking holistically about the sustained efforts that will be required to rebuild LA's unique homes, businesses, and cultural landmarks.

The Center looks forward to working with partners from all sectors and the community to restore the best of LA and manifest an even brighter future.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Center would like to thank all County departments and foundations who supported wildfire response and continue to play a vital role in the County's recovery. We extend a special thank you to those who provided information for this brief.

As always, we are grateful for the support of our Center Core Funders and County Department Partners:

Center Core Funders

Annenberg Foundation	John and Marilyn Wells Family Foundation
Ballmer Group	R & S Kayne Foundation
Blue Shield of California Foundation	LA Partnership for Early Childhood Investment
David Bohnett Foundation	The Louis L. Borick Foundation
California Community Foundation	Anthony Pritzker Family Foundation
The California Endowment	The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation
Casey Family Programs	Reissa Foundation
Cedars-Sinai	The Rose Hills Foundation
The Carol and James Collins Foundation	Specialty Family Foundation
The Deutsch Foundation	Donor Advised Fund- California Community Foundation (Anonymous)
The Dwight Stuart Youth Fund	United Way of Greater Los Angeles
The Eli and Edythe Broad Foundation	Weingart Foundation
First 5 LA	Wells Fargo
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation	The W.M. Keck Foundation
Crail-Johnson Foundation	
The James Irvine Foundation	

County Department Partners

Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)
Department of Mental Health (DMH)
Department of Public Social Services (DPSS)
Department of Health Services (DHS)
Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA)
Justice Care and Opportunities Department (JCOD)
Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO)
Department of Youth Development (DYD)
Probation Department
Department of Aging and Disabilities
Department of Arts and Culture
Department of Public Health (DPH)