



January 2025

Los Angeles Wildfires

AFTER ACTION REPORT

Response & Recovery Summary

211 LA: INFRASTRUCTURE OF CARE

In January 2025, Los Angeles County experienced a catastrophic disaster when multiple wildfires displaced nearly **150,000 residents**, destroyed more than **17,000 structures**, and burned hundreds of thousands of acres, with the Eaton Canyon and Palisades communities experiencing the most significant impact.



On January 7, 2025, 211 LA was formally activated by the Los Angeles County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) to provide 24/7 disaster information and referral (I&R) services and resource navigation support at local Disaster Recovery Centers (DRCs). Within hours, 211 LA rapidly scaled operations by activating national 211s and outsourced contact center surge partners, and deploying 165 Los Angeles County Disaster Service Workers (DSWs). This rapid expansion allowed 211 LA to manage nearly **42,000 wildfire-related contacts** and provide housing referrals, care coordination, and crisis assistance to over **54,000 affected households** during peak demand.

Leveraging pre-established partnerships with nonprofit organizations, local foundations, and private donors, 211 LA immediately arranged emergency housing for evacuees via Airbnb.org and Hilton Hotels. Within 48 hours, it launched a Care Coordination program to support long-term recovery serving **7,464 households** with priority given to seniors, families with children, and individuals with access and functional needs.

By combining contact center surge capacity, in-person navigation at Disaster Recovery Centers, care coordination, targeted communication campaigns, and real-time data dashboards, 211 LA delivered immediate relief while building a scalable, coordinated framework for long-term recovery, **solidifying its role as a vital part of Los Angeles County's infrastructure of care.**

Behind every data point is a person still recovering from unimaginable loss.

Maribel Marin, Executive Director, 211 LA

2025 Wildfire Response



150,000+
RESIDENTS DISPLACED



41,669
WILDFIRE-RELATED
CALLS



17,000+
STRUCTURES
DESTROYED



6.7M+
SOCIAL MEDIA
IMPRESSIONS



13,994
HOUSEHOLDS HOUSED VIA
AIRBNB.ORG & HILTON



30K+
TEXT ALERTS SENT



7,464
HOUSEHOLDS ENROLLED
IN CARE COORDINATION



\$658,500
CASH AID DISTRIBUTED

The data now confirms what so many survivors already know: 211 LA helped thousands access life-saving resources like emergency housing, food, and clothing. As we move forward, this kind of partnership and insight will be essential to building a recovery that is not only equitable, but also enduring.

Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath,
County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors

Major Program Components

Program Area	Successes	Challenges
2-1-1 Call Handling (Information & Referral): Expanded 2-1-1 call capacity with surge partners, national 211s, and LA County Disaster Service Workers.	Rapidly trained internal staff and external surge partners on disaster protocols while simultaneously configuring call handling systems, creating custom forms, and deploying tracking tools.	Evacuation zone residence verification delays, intensive Airbnb and Hilton intake process.
Emergency Housing Support: 211 LA provided temporary and long-term housing assistance through partnerships with Airbnb.org and Hilton Hotels.	Rapidly launched partnerships, housing over 14,000 households within the first 10 days from the onset of evacuations and extending stays for those with destroyed or damaged homes.	No pre-existing agreements or protocols, requiring mid-response development. Manual eligibility verification caused delays.
Disaster Resource Centers (DRCs): From day one, 211 LA deployed staff to all DRC locations, including UCLA, Pasadena City College, and Altadena, to provide in-person intake, navigation, and support for wildfire survivors.	Delivered trauma-informed, culturally responsive services through highly trained staff stationed at DRCs, creating safe and welcoming spaces for survivors.	Internet connectivity gaps and ADA/language access issues at DRCs.
Communications & Outreach: Communications rapidly transitioned from reactive information sharing to proactive outreach through text campaigns.	Achieved 6.7M+ social media post impressions, 35K+ shares amplifying awareness, 430K+ website visitors, 30K+ SMS messages resulting in thousands of enrollments into care coordination services. The outbound text campaign was highly effective, offering survivors a simple, trusted way to get accurate information, share resources, and stay connected to recovery updates.	Limited staffing and infrastructure at the onset created capacity strain during peak demand.

Major Program Components (Continued)

Program Area	Successes	Challenges
Recovery Care Coordination: 211 LA launched a dedicated care coordination program within 48 hours to provide individualized, trauma-informed recovery support for wildfire-impacted households.	Rapidly onboarded 40 Care Coordinators who supported more than 7,000 households, developed a level of care framework to ensure equitable, consistent service delivery.	Severe housing shortages and Care Coordinator caseloads exceeding 80 clients per care coordinator.
Technology & Data: 211 LA's Digital Systems and Data teams powered the wildfire response by building tools that enabled real-time tracking, coordination, and reporting across partners.	Developed and configured case management workflows and data collection, developed custom dashboards, implemented geospatial fire zone mapping, and streamlined case deduplication to improve accuracy and coordination.	Initial case deduplication delays and slow external system integration with 211 LA's digital platform.
Resource Database Curation: 211 LA's Resource Department served as the backbone for accurate disaster information, curating and updating thousands of resource records to support timely referrals.	Maintained real-time updates for thousands of resources, ensuring staff and partners had accurate information.	Rapidly changing information created inconsistencies and slowed response.
Administration Support - HR & Finance: 211 LA rapidly scaled its workforce and financial systems to meet the demands of the wildfire response.	Onboarded more than 45 new staff within six weeks, enabling expanded care coordination, call handling, and DRC coverage. Finance teams ensured timely, accurate tracking and reporting to partners and funders.	HR was initially under-resourced, slowing recruitment efforts, and causing pressure on the administrative burden.



Organizational Learnings

The 2025 wildfires transformed 211 LA's disaster response capacity, proving its role as Los Angeles County's essential infrastructure and delivering lessons to strengthen future preparedness and recovery. Key learnings:

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| 1 | Scalable Staffing & Wellness | High caseloads and extended DRC shifts caused staff fatigue. Future responses require surge-ready staffing pools, pre-trained Care Coordinators, and wellness-focused rotations to sustain workforce capacity. |
| 2 | Equity in Access | The response highlighted the need to focus on the most vulnerable populations, including seniors, people with disabilities or access and functional needs, and families with children, who were identified as priority groups due to their heightened risk during disasters. 211 LA partnered with Independent Living Centers (ILCs), Communities Actively Living Independent & Free (CALIF) and Service Center for Independent Life (SCIL) to leverage their expertise in aging, disability, and family services, ensuring these priority populations were effectively reached and supported. |
| 3 | Technology & Data | Dashboards, fire zone mapping, and secure document exchange improved response, but late-added fields and manual deduplication slowed efficiency. Pre-approved tools, centralized resource hubs, and automated workflows will streamline future activations. |
| 4 | Cross-Sector Coordination | Partnerships with American Red Cross and housing providers were critical, but inconsistent updates and fragmented communication caused confusion. A centralized, digital eligibility and resource hub will ensure timely, consistent information sharing. |
| 5 | Communications Capacity | Social media campaigns and SMS text messaging (inbound and outbound) proved highly effective, yet limited staffing delayed early deployment. A year-round emergency communications team with pre-approved tools will accelerate outreach in future disasters. |

Operational Recommendations

1	Strengthen Preparedness	Review and update our Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to include new technology and communication modalities, new partnership strategies and connection protocols, checklists, and training libraries, and conduct quarterly disaster simulations and Tabletop Exercises to ensure staff and surge partner readiness.
2	Expand Capacity	Hire a full-time Disaster Manager/Coordinator and establish a pre-trained roster of Care Coordinators for rapid deployment.
3	Enhance Communications	Build a dedicated, year-round communications team and secure pre-approved messaging tools and partnership agreements for faster activation.
4	Strengthen Care Coordination	Activate care coordination early, standardize protocols, and provide training on FEMA navigation and fraud prevention to ensure consistent, equitable service.
5	Improve Technology & Data	Appoint dedicated Disaster Tech and Data Leads, streamline intake processes, and enhance system integration for faster, more accurate data sharing.
6	Formalize Partnerships	Establish MOUs with local VOAD, American Red Cross, and other disaster response partners to improve coordination and reduce duplication of efforts.
7	Plan for Workforce Surge	Future responses should use surge partners, outsourced call centers as needed, and pre-planned HR pipelines to quickly scale staffing, sustain call capacity, and ensure timely, accurate timekeeping.

Key Partnerships

211 LA's wildfire response was powered by a robust network of operational and funding partners who played critical roles across every phase of response and recovery. These partnerships went beyond funding, delivering the staffing, infrastructure, and expertise needed to meet immediate needs and sustain recovery efforts.



SERVICE PARTNERS:

County of Los Angeles Disaster Service Workers expanded call handling capacity, while two local nonprofit independent living centers (ILCs), Communities Living Independent and Free (CALIF) and Service Center for Independent Life (SCIL), along with national 211 partners including United Way of Greater Cincinnati and United Way of Rhode Island, provided surge staffing and care coordination for seniors, people with disabilities, and families with children. Our ILC partners additionally provided client connections to resources for replacing medical equipment and other assistive devices through Ford Foundation funding and through the Disability Community Resource Center (another local nonprofit ILC).

HOUSING SUPPORT PARTNERS:

Airbnb.org and Hilton Hotels provided emergency housing for displaced households during the evacuation period, Airbnb.org provided extended stays through July, and Salvation Army offered rental assistance for eligible clients.

FUNDERS AND OPERATIONAL SUPPORT:

American Red Cross, GoFundMe, California Community Foundation, FireAid, Airbnb.org, and United Way Worldwide and other partners provided cash aid for wildfire victims, operational funding for 211 LA, and additional resources to support long-term recovery efforts.

"As we continue to recover from the devastating January wildfires, I appreciate the ongoing support from all of our community partners."

**Supervisor Kathryn Barger,
County of Los Angeles Board of Supervisors**

Building Resilience Beyond the Flames

211 LA's experience during the wildfires underscores a vital truth: disaster response cannot end when the flames are extinguished. True resilience depends on sustained investment in preparedness and recovery infrastructure that supports families and people in crisis for the long haul.

Today, more than 2,000 households still rely on 211 LA's care coordination, including over 500 homeowners who will need years of support as they rebuild. Yet without renewed funding beyond December 2025, survivors face losing critical support at the most vulnerable stage of recovery. This impending cliff has been worsened by 211 LA's exclusion from long-term recovery funding streams like FEMA's Disaster Case Management Program, despite our proven capacity and direct service to wildfire survivors.

We urge our partners to close this gap. With your support, 211 LA can ensure that no one who needs help is left behind, and that Los Angeles moves from crisis response to lasting resilience, building a stronger, safer community for all.

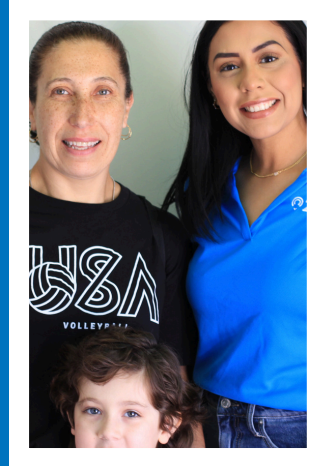


Scan to Explore Our Impact - See real stories, data, and reports showing how 211 LA connects people to hope, stability, and recovery.

Scan the QR code to partner with 211 LA and to receive the Comprehensive LA Wildfire After Action Report.
Official release on September 30, 2025



Meet the Families & Individuals in Wildfire Recovery



Survivor Story: Layla's Journey

When the Pacific Palisades Fire struck on January 7, 2025, Layla Hawkins, a 66-year-old Malibu resident, lost her home of 40 years along with everything inside. Displaced with her daughter and 3-year-old granddaughter, Layla described it as “an absolute nightmare with no light at the end of this dark tunnel.”

That light came when she connected with 211 LA Care Coordinator Dorothy, whom she calls her “guardian angel.” Through 211 LA’s partnerships, Layla received **\$1,000 in emergency cash aid**, secured nearly **\$10,000 in FEMA assistance**, and was provided **30 days of housing** through Airbnb.org, giving her family stability while they planned for the long rebuild ahead. Dorothy continues to guide Layla through recovery with rental support, furniture assistance, and referrals to mental health services.

There had been days when I had no hope at all, and you came through for me... I could not have survived these past 8 darkest months without you.

Layla, Palisades Fire Survivor





 Dial 2-1-1 for help 24/7

 Visit us at 211LA.org

 info@211LA.org

