



Visión y Compromiso Supporting the Altadena Community Through Fire Recovery

A Project Update Report | December 2025

Visión y Compromiso™


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Executive Summary

For the last twenty-five years, Visión y Compromiso has been committed to improving the health and well-being of communities with limited access to resources across California through the Promotora Model for community transformation, which uplifts the role of community-based promotoras and community health workers as key contributors and experts to increasing community health and wellness. As a nationally recognized and respected non-profit organization, Visión y Compromiso supports a network of more than 4,000 promotoras and community health workers across thirteen regions in California by providing a range of services and guidance, including leadership development, capacity building, and advocacy training.

4,000 promotoras and community health workers supported

About This Report

This report summarizes the findings from the distribution of direct financial support to 235 families impacted by the fire. It also highlights findings from a web-based needs assessment survey conducted in the Altadena region to identify existing needs.

235 families impacted by fire supported



Los Angeles Wildfires

At the start of the new year on January 7, 2025, the Los Angeles region faced the most devastating wildfire in its history, leaving long-lasting health, mental health, and economic impacts for affected communities.¹ Recent research conducted by UCLA found that the January 2025 fires had severe economic impacts, including:

- \$76 billion and \$131 billion in property and capital losses
- \$297 million wage loss for local businesses and employees in the impacted regions
- A rise in rental costs, particularly for fire impacted regions
- Increased insurance premiums

Fire Aid Project Goals

Recognizing the ongoing needs of the Altadena community, Fire Aid LA and Visión y Compromiso partnered to provide community-centered recovery to families directly impacted by the fire. This project supported Visión y Compromiso in establishing a promotora-led program in the Eaton fire area and the distribution of one-time \$1,000 stipends to families directly impacted by the fire. The distribution of the funds took place between October to December 2025.

Data Collection Efforts

In this project, Visión y Compromiso engaged in the following data collection efforts:

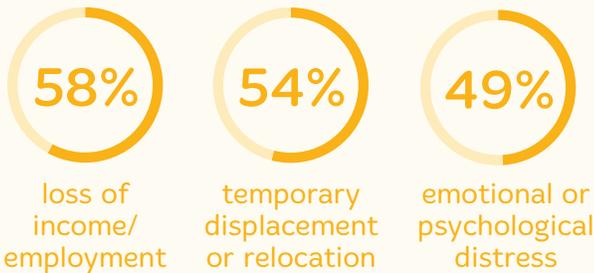
- Web-based needs assessment survey
- Focus groups with community members impacted by the wildfires
- Focus group with Visión y Compromiso promotoras
- Stipend interest form
- Stipend application survey

¹ <https://www.anderson.ucla.edu/about/centers/ucla-anderson-forecast/economic-impact-los-angeles-wildfires>



Impact of the January 2025 LA Fires

- Nearly all needs assessment survey respondents (99%) indicated being impacted by the January 2025 fires. The most frequently reported impacts were **loss of income/employment** (58%), **temporary displacement or relocation** (54%), and **emotional or psychological distress** (49%).



- The majority of survey participants (83%) also reported that close relatives and family members experienced negative impacts as a result of the January fires. Cited impacts included loss of employment or income (50%), temporary displacement (50%), and property damage (49%).
- Focus group findings affirm survey data. Key impacts reported by focus group participants include loss of property and homes, loss of personal belongings, relocation, job loss, emotional and psychological stress, loss of community connection, and health impacts, including weight loss, asthma, and bronchitis.

Findings: Needs Assessment & Focus Groups

A total of 182 needs assessment survey responses were submitted, including 172 completed surveys and 10 partial submissions. The majority of survey submissions (84%) were in Spanish and approximately 16% of surveys were completed in English. A total of 28 community members participated in two Spanish language focus groups that were implemented in Altadena.

182 needs assessment survey responses submitted



Demographic Snapshot of Participants

- A larger proportion of survey participants reported residing in Altadena at the time of the survey.
- Survey respondents were primarily Hispanic/Latina women between the ages of 30 and 59.
- The average household size reported was 4.1, and more than half of the survey participants were the primary caregiver for children in their households.
- The majority of survey participants were renters.



Current Needs

The highest needs for survey respondents included **financial support** (97%), **food and water access** (75%), and **housing assistance** (49%).



financial support



food and water access



housing assistance



Financial needs primarily consisted of the following: emergency cash assistance (67%) and help with paying bills (57%).



Food and water needs primarily consisted of the following: food pantry access (73%) and grocery vouchers (70%).



Housing assistance needs primarily consisted of the following: rental or mortgage assistance (74%) and home repairs (21%).

Stipend Distribution

The stipend distribution effort was grounded in Visión y Compromiso's long-standing community-centered and promotora-led model. Visión y Compromiso promotoras had pre-existing relationships and connections within the Altadena community, which played a critical role in establishing trust with residents impacted by the fires. Promotoras maintained a consistent presence in the community, serving as trusted points of contact and support throughout the application and distribution process. Through the stipend distribution process, Visión y Compromiso:

- Established a promotora-led program in areas impacted by the Eaton fire.
- Strengthened relationships with fire relief efforts and organizations, including the local Altadena public library and the New Altadena Disaster Recovery Center.
- Received 660 stipend applications.
- Processed 235 households for stipend distribution.

Lessons Learned

Visión y Compromiso promotoras offer the following lessons learned to funders and community partners seeking to implement community-based recovery efforts:

- Integrate a promotora-led model into natural disaster recovery efforts.
- Increase access to direct financial assistance.
- Focus on trust and relationship building with impacted communities.
- Learn and understand the existing efforts to support impacted communities.
- Assess whether the recovery support is reaching the most impacted communities.

Looking Ahead

In 2026, Visión y Compromiso will continue to support and prioritize fire-impacted communities in the Los Angeles region, planning and participating in community events to share information and referring community members to essential services and resources. Additionally, through a partnership with national funder collaborative Home Grown, First 5 LA and Visión y Compromiso, will implement the Thriving Providers Project so twenty-five Friend, Family, and Neighbor (FFN) caregiving providers in Los Angeles County, living in or near fire-impacted areas, receive direct cash transfers of \$954 for a period of 18 months. The first cash transfer will be on February 15, 2026, and the last one on July 31, 2027.

This work builds on an ongoing demonstration project with the same partner organizations. The Thriving Providers Project (TPP) supports the economic stability of FFN providers with ongoing direct cash transfers to 25 FFN caregivers in Los Angeles County. Additionally, TPP offers optional training in key areas, including CPR/First Aid and child development. With support from Fire Aid funding, FFNs impacted by the January 2025 fires will now receive direct cash transfers for 18 months, supporting providers to build up savings, provide high-quality learning opportunities to children under their care, and continue in the child care field.

Introduction

About Visión y Compromiso

For the last twenty-five years, Visión y Compromiso has been committed to improving the health and well-being of communities with limited access to resources across California through the Promotora Model, which uplifts the role of community-based promotoras and community health workers as key contributors and experts to increasing community health and wellness. As a nationally recognized and respected non-profit organization, Visión y Compromiso supports a network of more than 4,000 promotoras and community health workers across thirteen regions in California by providing a range of services and guidance including leadership development, capacity building, and advocacy training.

Los Angeles Wildfires

At the start of the new year on January 7, 2025, Los Angeles faced the most devastating wildfire in its history, leaving long-lasting health, mental health, and economic impacts for the region and affected communities.² According to research conducted by the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA), the wildfires burned 55,082 acres, with the Palisades and Eaton fires being the most impactful, burning more than 37,000 acres. This natural disaster had severe economic impacts, including:³

- \$76 billion and \$131 billion in property and capital losses
- \$297 million wage loss for local businesses and employees in the impacted regions
- A rise in rental costs, particularly for fire impacted regions
- Increased insurance premiums



IMPACT OF THE EATON FIRE



9,413

total structures lost including...

6,116

residential homes

3,144

infrastructure buildings

98

commercial buildings

55

schools and churches

Preliminary data specific to the Eaton fire in the Altadena region states that over 9,400 structures were destroyed. The majority of these, over 6,000, were residential homes.⁴ Recent research from Stanford University confirms that “months later, even residents whose home survived are still displaced, wrangling with insurers and weighing the health risks of the damage their neighborhoods sustained.”⁵

² <https://www.anderson.ucla.edu/about/centers/ucla-anderson-forecast/economic-impact-los-angeles-wildfires>

³ <https://www.anderson.ucla.edu/about/centers/ucla-anderson-forecast/economic-impact-los-angeles-wildfires>

⁴ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-01-16/mapping-los-angeles-damage-from-the-eaton-and-palisades-fires-altadena-pasadena>

⁵ <https://news.stanford.edu/stories/2025/06/california-eaton-fire-impact-mothers-parents-research>

35,000 estimated jobs held by Latinas(os/es), which may have been lost



of all workers in the impacted regions are Latinas(os/es)

The impact of the firestorms goes far beyond the devastating loss of wealthy and middle class communities' homes: Low-income and undocumented Black and brown residents and immigrants have also lost their livelihoods."

–Cal Matters

The Los Angeles fires also disproportionately impacted low-income communities, immigrant workers, and the Black community, with potentially permanent effects.⁶ Research and data analysis conducted at the time of the

Los Angeles Fires, estimated that **35,000** jobs held by Latinos may have been lost. Further, while Latinos represented 23% of the population in impacted areas, they constituted **36% of all workers** in those regions. In particular, service sector workers, including gardeners, housekeepers, child care providers, and car wash workers lost their sources of income from the work provided by the people who were evacuated, displaced or lost their homes. It is crucial to note that immigrants, and particularly undocumented immigrants who occupy jobs in these sectors, are often excluded from formal government aid, further placing them in vulnerable economic situations. Moreover, Black households in Altadena were severely affected by the Eaton fire. A UCLA study showed the following:



61%

of Black households in Altadena were located within the Eaton Fire perimeter, compared with 50% of non-Black households.⁷



50%+

of Black homeowners in Altadena were 65 or older, making them “vulnerable to incomplete or insufficient insurance coverage or predatory financial scams as they navigate[d] the process of rebuilding or restoring their homes.”⁸



48%

of Black households were destroyed or experienced major damage, compared to 37% of non-Black households.

In the face of these realities and the catastrophic toll the Los Angeles fires inflicted on the impacted regions, institutions like UCLA and other community-based organizations call for expanding targeted financial or state grant programs. Direct financial support or cash assistance is critical to the ongoing recovery of impacted communities, providing economic relief as they adjust to their new reality.

⁶ <https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/altadenas-black-community-disproportionately-affected-eaton-fire-report-shows> and <https://calmatters.org/environment/wildfires/2025/01/la-fires-workers-lost-jobs/>

⁷ <https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/altadenas-black-community-disproportionately-affected-eaton-fire-report-shows>

⁸ <https://newsroom.ucla.edu/releases/altadenas-black-community-disproportionately-affected-eaton-fire-report-shows>

Fire Aid Project Goals

Recognizing the ongoing fire recovery needs of the Altadena community, Visión y Compromiso partnered with Fire Aid LA to provide community-centered recovery to vulnerable and displaced families. The funds from Fire Aid supported Visión y Compromiso in establishing a promotora program in the Eaton fire area and in distributing \$1,000 stipends from October to December 2025 to families directly impacted by the fire. The specific phases of the work, along with key activities, are listed below.

PHASE 1

RELATIONSHIP AND TRUST BUILDING.

- Listening sessions and learning from community members
- Partnership building, deepen our engagement in community-centered collaboratives
- Resource mapping, leader identification

PHASE 2

TRAINING TO BUILD TRANSFORMATIVE COMMUNITY POWER.

- Recruit community members to lead a Community Advisory Group
- Identify core principles for working together (By us and for us)
- Training based on needs and interests identified by the community
- Leadership development, core skills, and advocacy training based on needs identified by community members
- Hire 3-6 (bilingual) full/part-time promotoras

This report summarizes the key activities completed under Phase 1 of the project, which included establishing a promotora program in the Eaton fire-impacted areas, conducting a web-based needs assessment survey, and distributing \$1,000 in direct financial support to 235 families or households impacted by the fire.

Data Collection Efforts

To meet the needs of the Altadena community and to ensure the recovery efforts were data-informed, Visión y Compromiso engaged in the following data collection methods:



Needs assessment survey. A voluntary, confidential, and web-based needs assessment survey was designed to capture the ongoing impact of the January 2025 fires in Altadena, the current needs of Altadena residents, and the needs of non-Altadena residents who are closely connected to the community through their jobs, children, education, or family ties. Survey respondents received a \$25 gift card upon completing the survey. The survey was fielded from October 2025 to November 2025. The needs assessment survey was available in English and Spanish. Visión y Compromiso promotoras served as data collectors and supported community members in completing the web-based survey. A total of 182 survey responses were submitted, with 172 completed surveys and 10 partial submissions.



Focus groups with community members impacted by the wildfires. To hear directly from community members impacted by the January 2025 fires, two in-person Spanish focus groups were conducted in October 2025 and November 2025. The focus groups aimed to gather qualitative data on how community members were impacted by the fires, the support they received, and their current needs. A total of 28 community members participated in the focus groups. It is important to note that for this project, the focus group provided a platform for wildfire survivors to share their harrowing experiences escaping the fires, coping with the aftermath, and navigating the complex needs and new challenges of being fire survivors in a group setting. The Visión y Compromiso promotoras played a critical role in recruitment, relationship-building, and holding safe spaces for community members, who were predominantly Spanish-speaking Latina women, to share their experiences and immediate needs. The focus group facilitator used a trauma-informed approach, ensuring that participants felt validated, heard, and encouraged to share their experiences at their own pace.



Focus group with promotoras supporting the Eaton fire-impacted areas. A virtual focus group was conducted in December 2025 with four Visión y Compromiso promotoras who were directly supporting the community members impacted by the Eaton fire. The focus group asked promotoras to uplift community challenges, the types of support that have been most helpful to fire survivors, and the lessons learned in establishing the promotora program in Altadena and managing the distribution of financial stipends.

Stipend Distribution Efforts

As noted earlier, Fire Aid and Visión y Compromiso partnered to provide one-time relief stipends of \$1,000 to Altadena families affected by the January 2025 fires. To receive stipends, community members needed to be 18 years of age, be current residents of Altadena, have been directly affected by the January 2025 fires, and provide proof of past or current Altadena residency. The methods used to gather data to distribute the one-time financial stipends are listed and described below.⁹

- **Web-based interest form.**
Developed at the initial stage of the project to determine interest in the relief stipends and facilitate the distribution of these funds.
- **Stipend application survey.**
To serve as a screening tool and to gather key documentation for the distribution of the \$1,000 relief stipends. The web-based application ensured that applicants met the eligibility requirements and also collected data on the impact of the January 2025 fires, along with key participant demographic information. Visión y Compromiso promotoras assisted in recruiting community members and supported the completion of the web-based application.

⁹ For a full description of the stipend distribution effort please see page 19 of this report.



Findings: Needs Assessment and Focus Groups

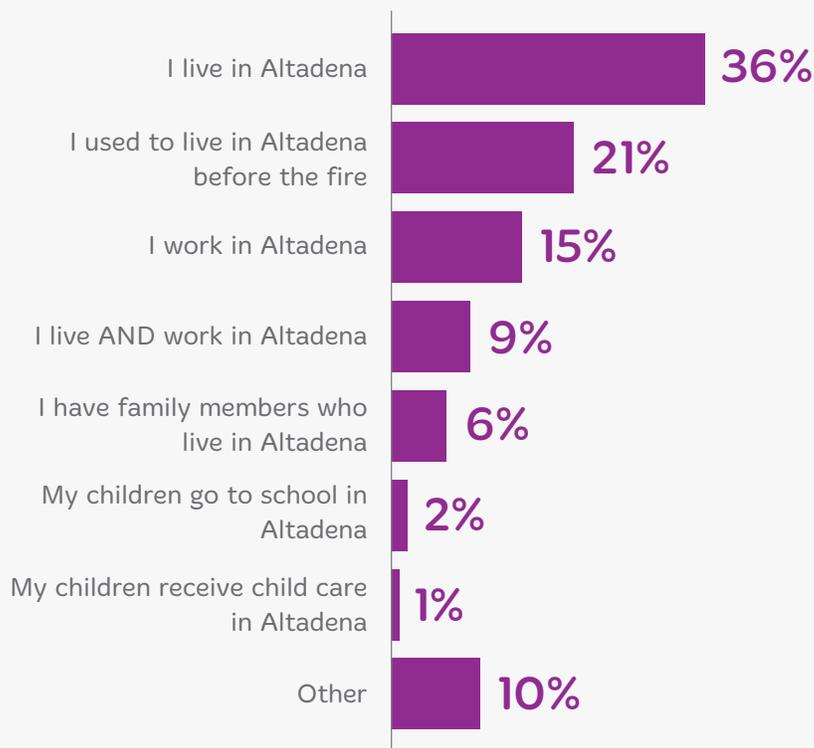
The following section of this report summarizes the web-based needs assessment results and includes focus group findings to provide additional context to the survey data. A total of 182 needs assessment survey responses were submitted, including 172 completed surveys and 10 partial submissions. The majority of survey submissions (84%) were in Spanish, and approximately 16% of surveys were completed in English. A total of 28 community members participated in the two in-person Spanish-language focus groups held in Altadena.

Demographic Snapshot of Needs Assessment Respondents

Connection to Altadena: A larger proportion of survey participants reported residing in Altadena at the time of the survey.

Over one-third of respondents (36%) reported living in Altadena, and about one-fifth of survey participants (21%) indicated living there before the January 2025 fires. Approximately 15% of survey respondents work in Altadena. Smaller percentages reported living and working in Altadena (9%), having family members who live in Altadena (6%), having children attending school in Altadena (2%), or having children who receive child care services in Altadena (1%).

Figure 1. Respondents' Connection to Altadena (n=182)



Gender, Age, and Ethnic/Racial Background: Survey respondents were primarily Hispanic/Latina women between the ages of 30 and 59.

Almost three-quarters of the survey respondents were between 30 to 59 years old (71%). More specifically, 35% were between 30 to 44 years old, and another 36% were in the 45 to 59 range. Most respondents identified as women (75%), and nearly one-quarter identified as men (24%). Additionally, the vast majority of survey participants were Hispanic/Latino(a) (93%), with smaller percentages identifying as Black/African American (5%), White (3%), or Asian (1%).

Figure 2. Gender Identity (n=107)

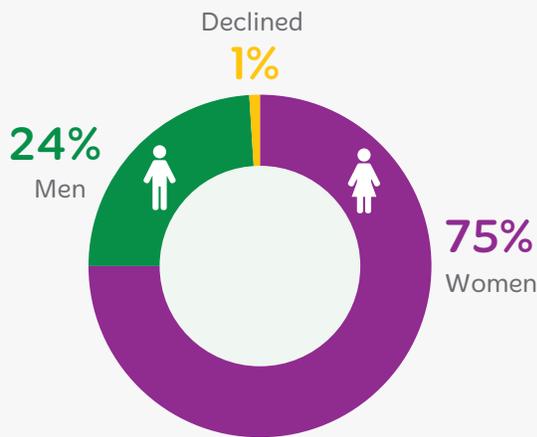


Figure 3. Age (n=173)

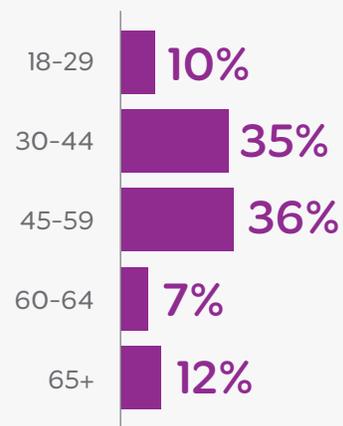


Figure 4. Racial/Ethnic Background (n=173)

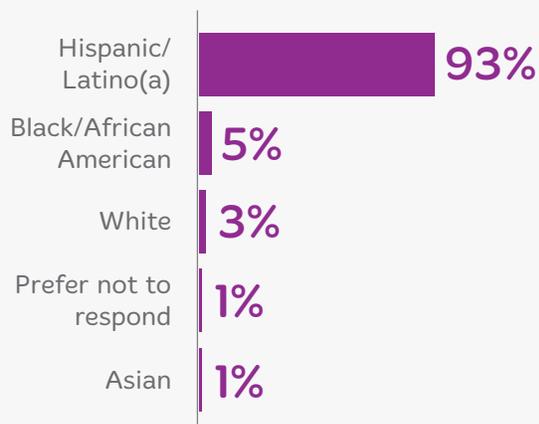
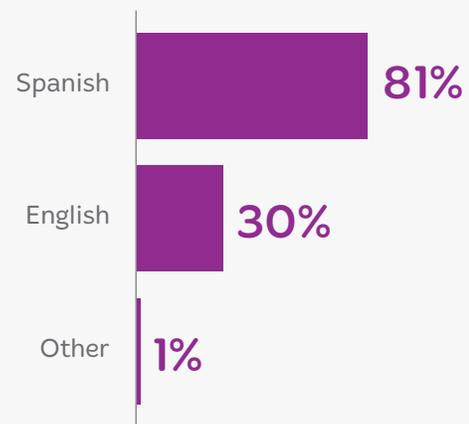


Figure 5. Language Respondents Are Fluent In (n=173)



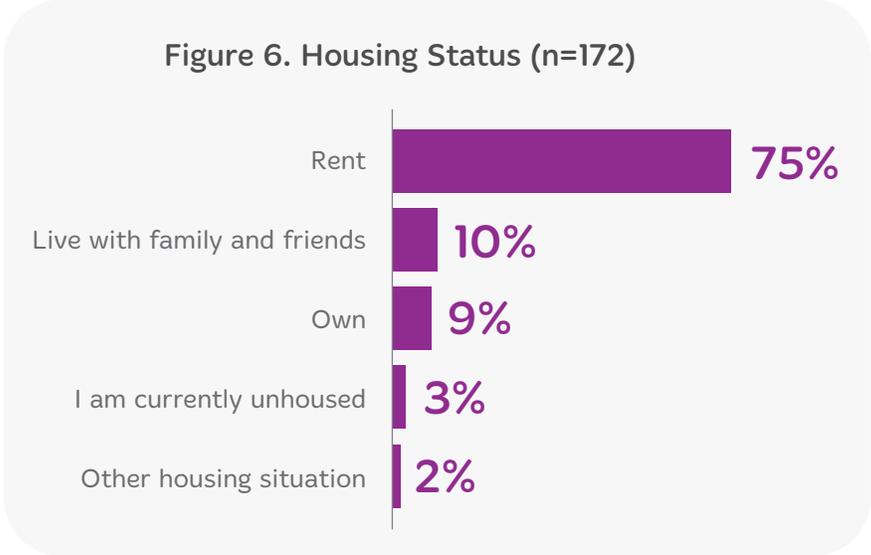
Household Composition: The average household size reported was 4.1, and more than half of the survey participants were the primary caregiver for children in their households.

On average, respondents reported living with 4.1 individuals in their households. Additionally, over half of the survey participants (64%) reported they were the primary caregiver for children in their households.

Housing Status:

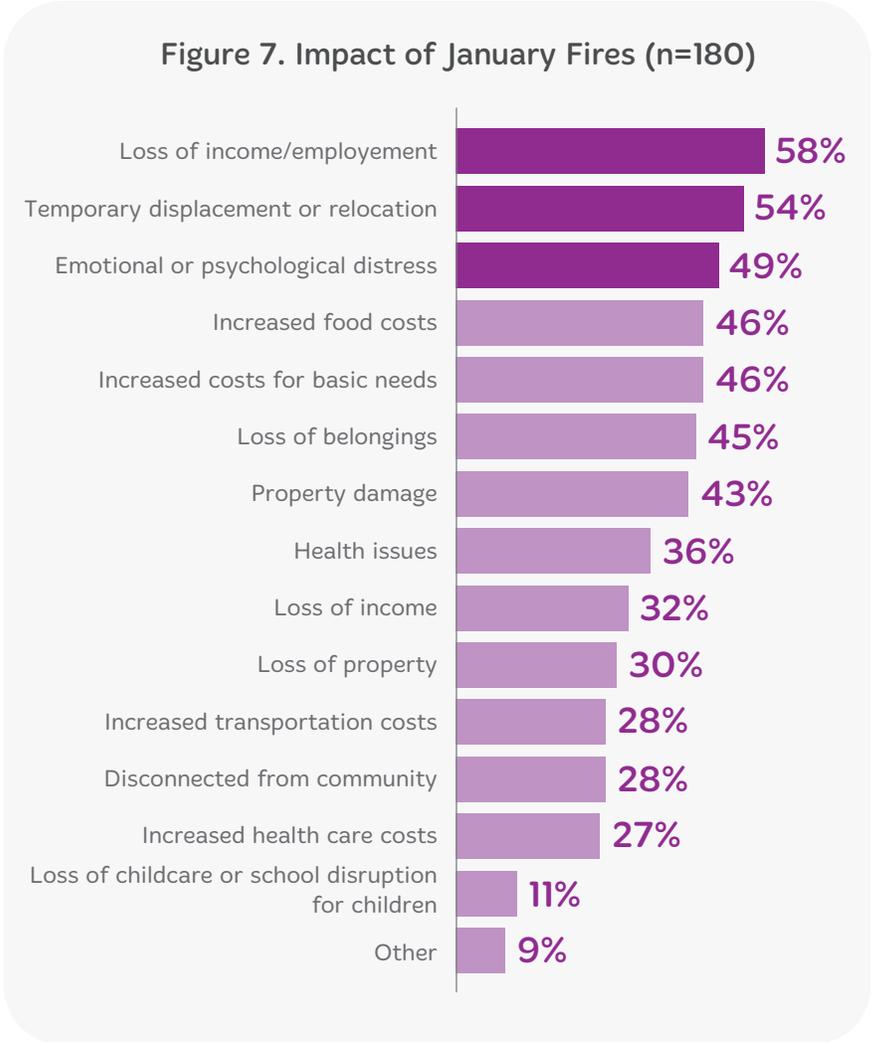
The majority of survey participants were renters.

Most survey participants were renters (75%), with only 9% owning their property. Approximately 10% of respondents were living with family and friends at the time of the survey, and 3% were unhoused.



Impact of the January 2025 Fires

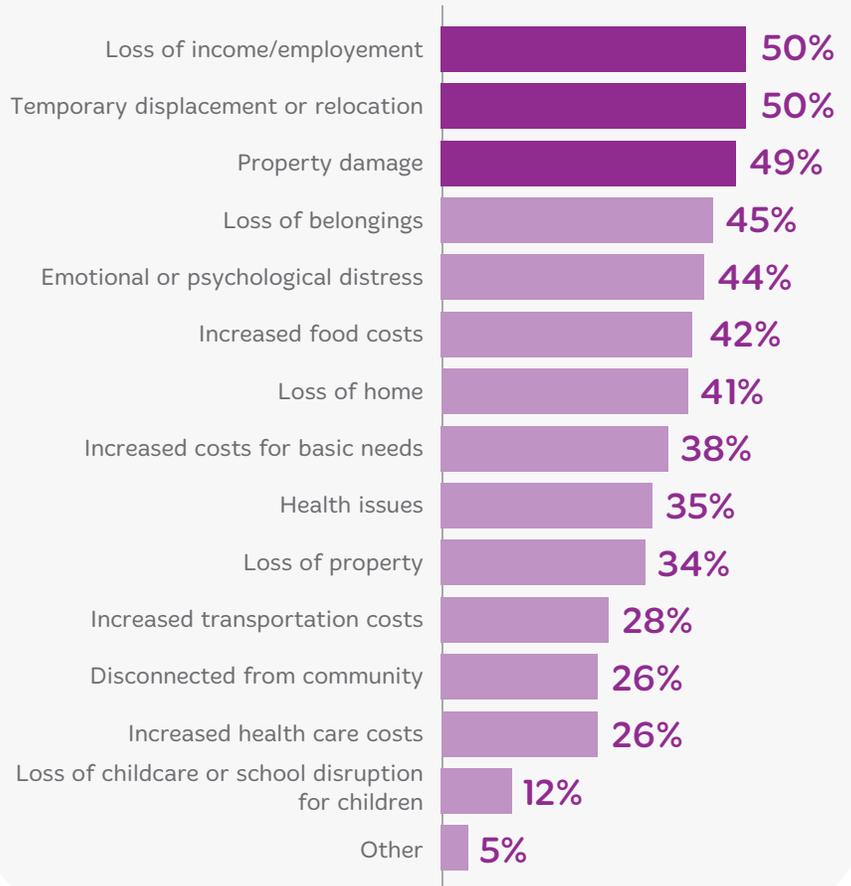
Nearly all needs assessment survey respondents (99%) indicated being impacted by the January 2025 fires. As displayed in Figure 7, the most frequently reported impacts were **loss of income/employment** (58%), **temporary displacement or relocation** (54%), and **emotional or psychological distress** (49%). Additionally, a large proportion of survey respondents indicated facing increased costs for basic needs, (46%), increased food costs (46%), loss of belongings, (45%), and property damage (43%). Roughly over one-third of respondents also experienced health issues (36%) such as smoke inhalation, respiratory problems, asthma, and allergies as a result of the January fire incident.



The majority of survey participants (83%) also reported that close relatives and family members experienced negative impacts as a result of the January fires. When asked how their family members were affected, the impacts cited included **loss of employment or income (50%)**, **temporary displacement (50%)** and **property damage (49%)**.



Figure 8. Impact of January Fires on Respondents' Relatives or Close Family Members (n=181)



Focus Group Key Findings: Impacts of the January 2025 Fires

- Loss of property and homes
- Loss of personal belongings
- Relocation
- Job loss
- Emotional and psychological distress, including trauma
- Loss of community connection
- Death of neighbors
- Health impacts, including weight loss, asthma, bronchitis, and vision or sight issues
- Changes of school or disruption in schooling for participants who had children

Through focus groups, participants shared personal accounts of how the January 2025 wildfires affected their lives and communities, expressed the significance of these experiences and provided additional context for the findings above. Focus group participants, many of whom were long-term Altadena residents, reported losing their homes, personal belongings, and employment due to the wildfires. For those who relocated, their loss also included feeling disconnected from their local community. Furthermore, focus group participants also shared that these losses, combined with the experience of escaping the fire and facing the aftermath, significantly impacted their and their families' emotional and mental health. Many focus group participants shared experiencing severe trauma during and after the fire, with emotional distress continuing in the long term. In particular, focus group participants with children reported that their children show signs of fear, distress,

anxiety, and are triggered by seeing flames or hearing loud wind. As one participant explained, “*The experience was traumatic. My daughter, when she sees a flame or something [like that] she gets desperate. She thinks [the fires] will happen again. The fires left this trauma in all of us.*” Additionally, several focus group participants experienced health issues after the January wildfire, including cough, asthma symptoms, and vision or sight issues. In one extreme case, the partner of a participant was hospitalized and continues to be in recovery 11 months after the fire.

Voices of Community Members: Surviving a Wildfire as an Older Adult and Adapting to a New Reality

Escaping the Fire

Maria, an older adult and long-term resident of Altadena, woke up at 4 a.m. on January 8, 2025, after hearing her husband’s shouts calling to her to turn off the smoke alarm in his room. Upon waking, Maria smelled smoke and immediately searched for her husband, who was making his way outside to the garden. As soon as she stepped outside, Maria saw that part of her house was engulfed in giant flames, fueled by the Santa Ana winds. Uncertain of what was happening, Maria called 911 for guidance and was told to evacuate immediately. After learning of the seriousness of the situation, Maria begged her husband to evacuate. Still in disbelief that the flames were consuming his home, he attempted to put out the fire with a water hose. Confused and alarmed by the fire, Maria ran into her house to try to save important personal documents. It was at this time that she realized the fire had spread to her bedroom. She ran outside and informed her husband, who was now completely paralyzed due to the shock that the fire was ravaging his home. He urged her to save herself and to seek help. Unable to move or carry her husband, Maria ran for safety. While trying to reach safety, a community member, a community member found Maria and her husband and led them to receive the medical care they desperately needed.

Long-term Health Impacts

Maria’s husband suffered severe burns and was hospitalized at the UCLA Medical Center for three months, where he underwent several surgeries. He spent seven months paralyzed and continues to recover from his injuries 11 months after the wildfires. Maria also suffered severe injuries as a result of escaping the fire. Maria reported vision problems, she almost suffered a cardiac arrest, and inhaled so much smoke that she now takes daily medication to control her new health symptoms. Maria also shared that she is coping with long-term trauma and emotional distress. She explained, “*I have trauma. I need psychological help.*”

A New Reality

Maria currently lives with her sister outside of Altadena. She is providing support for her husband, who remains hospitalized due to long-term health complications, while simultaneously engaging with insurance companies and local/state agencies to secure assistance for rebuilding her home. She depends on community-based organizations, like Visión y Compromiso, for essential support, including food assistance, financial aid, and navigation of resources. Grounded by her religious faith and support from community-based organizations, she continues her healing process and is adjusting to a new life after the wildfires.

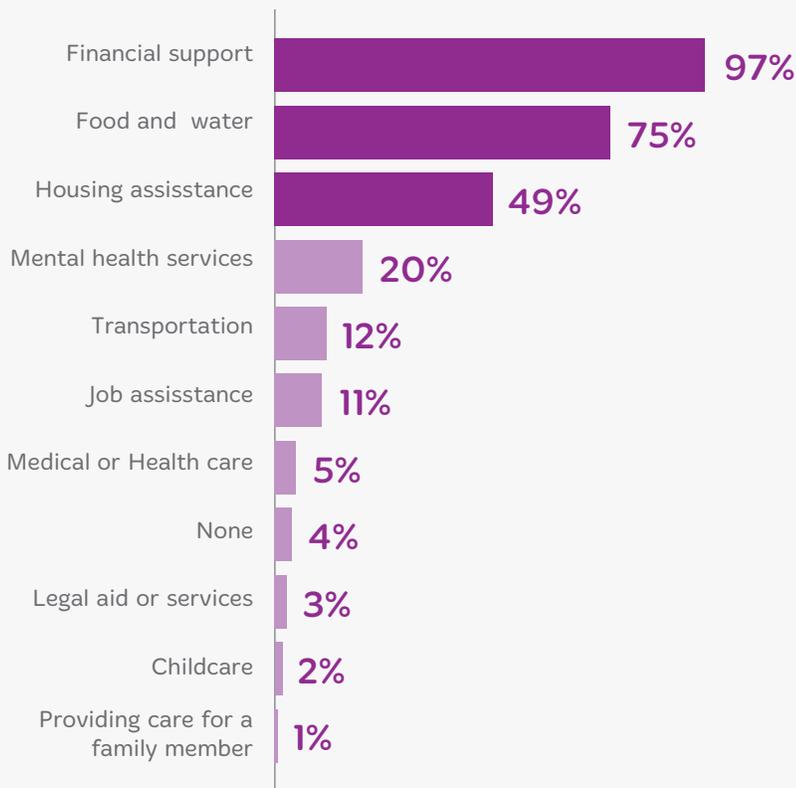
**A pseudonym is used to protect the participant’s identity and privacy.*

Current Needs

Survey respondents, the majority (99%) of whom were impacted by the fires, were asked to identify their current top three needs. As shown in the figure below, the highest needs among survey respondents included **financial support** (97%), **food and water access** (75%), and **housing assistance** (49%). These responses reflect broader data trends. For example, according to the UCLA Anderson School of Management, areas impacted by the January 2025 fires experienced a \$297 million wage loss for local businesses and employees, and in terms of housing, rental units were expected to become increasingly unaffordable as wildfires reduced housing supply in the wildfire-impacted areas.¹⁰ Of those who identified financial support, food and water access, and housing assistance as their top needs, only 16% were receiving support for these basic needs at the time they completed the survey, while the overwhelming majority (83%) were not receiving any support.

The overwhelming majority of survey respondents (83%) were not receiving any support to address their current needs at the time of the survey.

Figure 9. Top Current Needs (n=150)



Focus group data aligns with the findings listed above. In terms of housing needs, focus group data revealed that participants whose homes were burned or who required relocation faced extreme difficulty in finding stable and affordable housing in Altadena and in nearby areas. For long-term Altadena residents seeking housing, it was especially challenging, as they now faced an expensive, highly competitive rental market. In one focus group, community members reported having to relocate to Azusa, Los Angeles, or even as far as Fontana or Bakersfield to find housing. Relocation for many also meant letting go of pets and social connections, adjusting their children's daily routines, and facing a new economic reality due to extreme rental costs. As one participant explained, *"I had to move in with my brother, who lives in [Fontana]. I work at a McDonald's, and it closed*

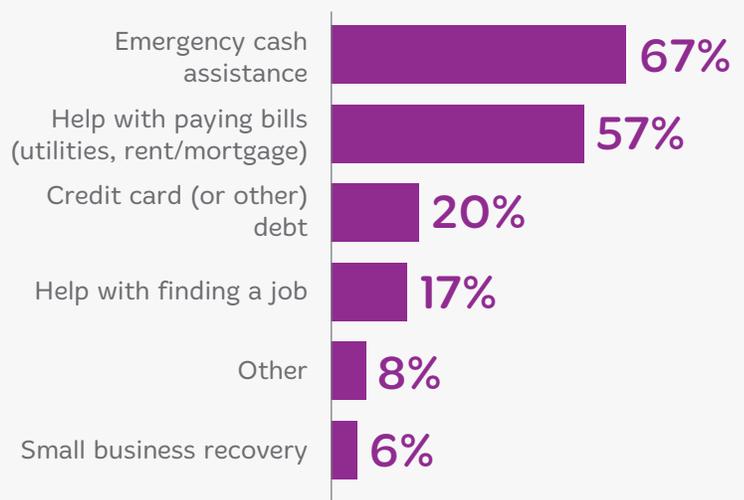
¹⁰ <https://www.lafoodbank.org/stories/economic-impact-of-greater-los-angeles-wildfires-the-food-bank-will-respond/> and <https://www.anderson.ucla.edu/about/centers/ucla-anderson-forecast/economic-impact-los-angeles-wildfires>

once the fire reached our area. I had no work during that time. [After the fires], my boss told me I could work up to 4 hours. That's how I was able to pay my rent." This same community member reported that her landlord continued to demand rental payments even while the fires were active in the area, and upon her return, she faced rent increases. In addition to the increased rent, she was also responsible for paying all the utility bills. Focus group participants are still recovering and facing financial strains due to the January fires, and are actively seeking direct financial and food access support. Their difficult economic situation is exacerbated by rising costs in housing, transportation (especially for those who relocated outside Altadena), medical care, and food.

Financial Support Needs

Those who identified financial support as a top need were asked to specify the types of financial assistance they currently needed. More than half of the respondents indicated a need for emergency cash assistance and help paying bills, such as utilities, rent, and mortgage payments (67% and 57%, respectively). Approximately 20% required financial assistance to cover credit card or other debt. Smaller proportions of respondents identified a need for help with finding employment (17%) and with small business recovery (6%).

Figure 10. Financial Support Needs (n=145)



Food and Water Needs

Of those who reported food and water needs, 46% were facing food insecurity at the time of the survey.

Approximately three-quarters of those who reported food and water needs indicated requiring assistance with food pantry access and grocery vouchers (73% and 70%, respectively). Additionally, over one-third of participants specified needing meal delivery services and access to clean water distribution (46% and 42%, respectively). Of those who reported needing food and water support, 46% were facing food insecurity at the time of the survey.

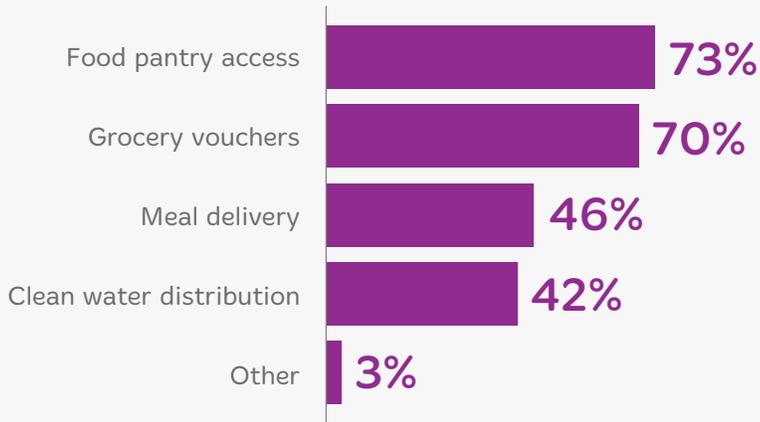
These data trends reflect the broader economic realities communities are facing, both nationally and locally, amid

increased food costs. For example, data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics shows that grocery prices increased by nearly 30% in the last five years.¹¹ Additionally, the most recent data available shows that in August of 2025, the index for food at home or grocery purchases advanced 3.6% in the Los Angeles region, up 3.3% from August 2024.¹²

¹¹ <https://www.npr.org/2025/09/19/nx-s1-5539547/grocery-prices-tariffs-food-inflation>

¹² https://www.bls.gov/regions/west/news-release/consumerpriceindex_losanageles.htm

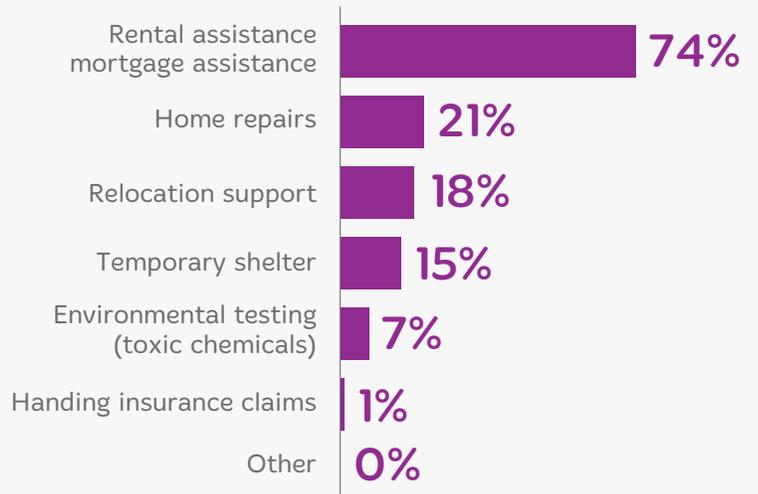
Figure 11. Food and Water Needs (n=109)



Housing Assistance Needs

As displayed in the figure below, roughly three-quarters (74%) of respondents reported a need for rental or mortgage assistance services. In addition, 21% required support with home repairs, and 18% still needed relocation assistance. Furthermore, almost one-quarter (22%) of those who reported a need for housing assistance were experiencing housing insecurity at the time of the survey.

Figure 12. Housing Needs (n=73)



Voices of Community Members: A Mother's Experience Rebuilding Community and Finding a New Home

More than a House

Dolores lived in Altadena with her husband, four children, and three dogs for over a decade before the fires. Dolores' Altadena home served as a medical space for her son, who suffers from a severe heart condition, which necessitates the use of an external oxygen source during sleep. Having supported her son through two open-heart surgeries, Dolores had acquired and set up all the necessary medical equipment for her son's survival in her Altadena home. Additionally, over the years, Dolores had cultivated a strong social and family network, with her sister-in-law living nearby and several neighbors becoming close friends. However, her stability and support system changed rapidly in January 2025. Her house started burning in the middle of the night, and in the panic of trying to evacuate, Dolores and her family tried to salvage medical equipment, personal documents, and other valuables. However, most of their belongings perished, including their home of many years and her son's medical equipment.

Coping with a New Reality

As a result of the wildfire, Dolores and her family moved to Azusa, which is about a 39-minute drive from Altadena during peak traffic. The move affected Dolores and her family in significant ways. For example, Dolores and her family faced a highly competitive rental market and high housing costs, resulting in them being able to afford only a one-bedroom apartment with a monthly rent of \$2,250. Moreover, to secure this housing, her two older children had to move out, and she had to let go of her three dogs. Explaining her current situation, Dolores stated, ***"I want to keep my family together like it was before [the fires]. I had to stay only with my two younger children and my husband. [The fire changed my life] physically and emotionally."*** Dolores also faced increased transportation costs because her family commutes to Altadena daily for work and her children's school. Additionally, Dolores lost her social network when her sister-in-law moved to Bakersfield and her neighbors relocated to other cities. In this regard, she shared, ***"socially it is not the same because I don't have the same connections. My sister-in-law lived [nearby], and I had neighbors I had known for a long time. My sister in-law didn't find any housing here, so she moved to Bakersfield. Some of my neighbors didn't find housing either, and I haven't seen them in a long time. Our lives changed completely, and I still carry that scar."***

Finding Hope to Move Forward

Dolores finds hope through her faith in God, her children, and the support she receives from food banks and basic-needs donations. Dolores knows the road to recovery and stability will be long, but she shows up for her family every day, striving to move forward one step at a time.

**A pseudonym is used to protect the participant's identity and privacy.*

Stipend Distribution

This section of the report covers the efforts to distribute the one-time relief stipends of \$1,000 to Altadena families and community members who were directly affected by the January 2025 fires.

Approach

The stipend distribution effort was grounded in Visión y Compromiso's long-standing community-centered and promotora-led model. Visión y Compromiso promotoras had pre-existing relationships and connections within the Altadena community, which played a critical role in establishing trust with residents impacted by the January 2025 fires. Promotoras maintained a consistent presence in the community, serving as trusted points of contact and support throughout the application and distribution process.

To increase accessibility and reduce barriers, promotoras met applicants in familiar and convenient community locations. A local McDonald's restaurant served as a consistent meeting point where applicants could receive support completing applications, ask questions, and review documentation requirements in person. This approach was especially important for applicants who were hesitant to upload or send digital copies of personal documents due to privacy concerns or limited access to technology.

Recognizing that many residents lost important documents during the fires, the application process allowed for flexible verification options. Applicants could provide self-attestation or alternative documentation, such as school or employer records, community or neighbor letters, or disaster-relief registration, when standard documents were unavailable. This flexibility helped ensure that eligible community members were not excluded due to circumstances beyond their control.

In addition, Visión y Compromiso partnered with the local public library to host stipend gift card distribution. The library provided a trusted, neutral, and accessible location for participants to receive their stipends in a safe and organized setting. The consistent presence of the team in the community, combined with ongoing follow-up and individualized support, was essential in building trust and increasing participation.



STIPEND DISTRIBUTION HIGHLIGHTS



600+

stipend applications were received

235

households approved to receive stipends

Applicants identified the following urgent needs:

- Emergency cash assistance
- Food access
- Clothing access
- School supply access
- Housing stability

Outreach and Access Strategy

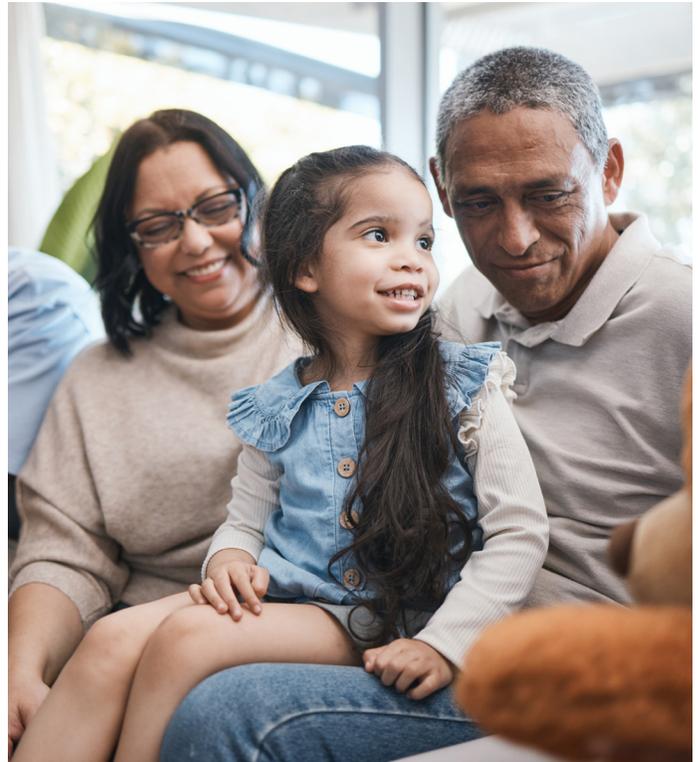
A multi-pronged outreach strategy was implemented to ensure broad and equitable access to the stipend opportunity. Outreach efforts included promotora-led outreach, community walks, distribution of flyers, word-of-mouth referrals, and referrals from trusted partner organizations.

Flyers clearly communicated key information prior to application, including eligibility requirements and safeguards to ensure fairness. Messaging emphasized that only one applicant per household was eligible to receive the stipend, that duplicate applications from the same address would not be approved, and that applicants should consult with family members or housemates before applying. Flyers also reinforced confidentiality protections, noting that individual applicant information could not be shared under any circumstances, and that each applicant would receive their decision directly. Additionally, applicants were advised to consider whether accepting the \$1,000 stipend could impact any public benefits they currently receive.

Visión y Compromiso also collaborated closely with the New Altadena Disaster Recovery Center, which supported outreach by sharing the stipend opportunity with its community partners during listening sessions. In addition, the team attended Radio KBLA's Altadena/Eaton Fire Town Hall to distribute flyers and connect directly with community members impacted by the fires.

Applications were completed through a web-based platform, with the option for applicants to complete the form alongside a promotora at a time and location that was convenient for them. Applications were available in both Spanish and English. Promotoras provided hands-on support with application completion, technology access, language interpretation, and follow-up communication.

While technology challenges were common, particularly with uploading documentation—these challenges became opportunities to build trust. Many applicants initially expressed skepticism, noting that the stipend opportunity seemed “too



good to be true.” In-person support and consistent follow-up helped address concerns and reassured applicants about the legitimacy of the program.

Application Volume and Status

Visión y Compromiso received a total of 660 stipend applications, reflecting significant ongoing need within the community nearly one year after the fires. As of this date, 235 households have been approved and received the \$1,000 stipend.

The volume of applications underscores both the scale of need and the importance of clear communication, careful review, and ongoing follow-up to ensure equitable distribution of limited funds.

Review and Verification Process

Applications were reviewed using a structured process designed to ensure fairness, accuracy, and responsible stewardship of funds while remaining trauma-informed and accessible. Key review steps included eligibility verification, address verification to ensure only one stipend per household, documentation review, and duplication checks.

To prevent duplicate awards, Visión y Compromiso implemented systems to identify applications submitted from the same household address. The program consultant and program leads conducted multiple rounds of review, discussing applications that required clarification or additional documentation. This collaborative review process helped ensure consistency and accuracy in decision-making.

Flexibility was intentionally built into the verification process. Self-attestation and alternative forms of documentation, including employer or school records, community or neighbor letters, and disaster-relief registration were accepted when traditional documents were unavailable. This approach significantly reduced barriers for displaced households and individuals who lost documentation during the fires.

Distribution Method

Approved applicants received a one-time \$1,000 stipend distributed via gift card. Distribution occurred on a rolling basis, with flexibility built into scheduling to accommodate participants' availability. Applicants were able to select a preferred pickup time through an appointment link, and distribution was offered Monday through Saturday at the local library to support participants with varying work schedules and caregiving responsibilities.

Promotoras played a central role in distribution logistics, including sending confirmation messages and reminders, coordinating scheduling, providing follow-up support, and troubleshooting any issues that arose. Strong internal team communication

was essential to minimizing technical challenges and ensuring a smooth distribution process for participants.

Household Characteristics and Reported Needs

Applications reflected households experiencing layered vulnerability, including displaced households, single-parent families, multigenerational households, households with young children and seniors, renters, and individuals temporarily living with family or friends.

Applicants most frequently reported urgent needs for **emergency cash assistance, food, clothing, school supplies, and housing stability**. These patterns align closely with findings from the needs assessment survey and focus groups, reinforcing that financial and basic needs insecurity persisted well beyond the immediate aftermath of the fires.

Equity and Trauma-Informed Design

The stipend distribution process was intentionally designed to minimize harm and reduce barriers for participants. Key design elements included a bilingual application, promotora-led support, flexible documentation requirements, optional story sharing, and phone-based follow-up.

These choices were particularly important for a community navigating displacement, trauma, language barriers, and exclusion from traditional disaster assistance. By centering dignity, trust, and accessibility, Visión y Compromiso ensured that community members could engage with the process without fear, stigma, or undue burden.



Lessons Learned

This section of the report summarizes lessons learned from Visión y Compromiso promotoras who implemented direct financial recovery support for communities in Altadena impacted by the January 2025 wildfires. Some lessons also stem from the experiences of focus group participants. These lessons learned aim to highlight key practices for future community-based recovery efforts.

Integrate the Promotora Model into natural disaster recovery efforts. The Promotora Model was essential to ensuring the timely and effective distribution of financial stipends to impacted communities in Altadena and surrounding regions, demonstrating its effectiveness in supporting natural disaster recovery efforts. As noted earlier in this report, Visión y Compromiso promotoras quickly established a consistent presence in Altadena in a local eatery. They engaged in key outreach strategies, including community walks, flyer distribution, and direct contact with community members to learn about their needs and struggles and to validate their experiences of surviving the January 2025 fires. In the focus group, Visión y Compromiso promotoras expressed that this model is critical to fostering a stronger connection and bridging organizational support to community needs. The stipend distribution efforts underscore the crucial role of promotoras as trusted messengers and navigators during times of natural disaster recovery.

Increase access to direct financial assistance.

The stipend relief effort, needs assessment, and focus group findings demonstrate the ongoing

“The Promotora Model is important because promotoras speak the words of the community. Promotoras have empathy and this allows for community members to connect with community based organizations.”

-Visión y Compromiso Promotora

high need in Altadena months after the January 2025 fires. As described in prior sections of this report, community members directly impacted by the fire need direct cash assistance to cover rent and food costs. The level of interest and the number of stipend applications submitted highlight the need and the effectiveness of direct cash assistance when implemented through trusted, community-based models.

Focus on trust and relationship building with impacted communities. Visión y Compromiso promotoras also emphasized the importance of prioritizing trust and relationship building with communities to truly understand the significance of their experiences and to fully grasp the urgency of community needs. Prioritizing relationship building is particularly important to ensure that the most impacted communities access critical recovery supports, especially for community members who are hesitant to access services due to their immigration status and language barriers.

Learn and understand the existing efforts to support impacted communities. At the initial stages of the stipend distribution efforts, Visión y Compromiso promotoras researched and learned about the existing local recovery efforts in Altadena. This allowed promotoras to tailor their support to community members, establish a presence in the region, and collaborate with existing efforts to provide greater support. Through the stipend distribution efforts, Visión y Compromiso promotoras collaborated with the New Altadena Disaster Recovery Center. They attended the KBLA's Altadena/Eaton Fire Town Hall sessions to establish a presence in the region and learn about existing recovery efforts.

Assess whether the recovery support is reaching the most impacted communities. Across the focus groups, community members were vocal about the need to evaluate if recovery efforts are truly reaching the most in need. Focus group participants explained that recovery efforts should also extend to community members who lost employment or faced other critical impacts from the fire. Additionally, focus group participants also mentioned the importance of including aid for undocumented individuals who often do not access support due to a lack of documentation.

Looking Ahead

In 2026, Visión y Compromiso will continue to support and prioritize fire-impacted communities in the Los Angeles region.

We will implement Phase 2 of the Fire Aid grant to plan and participate in community events, share information and refer community members to essential services and resources.

Additionally, through a partnership with national funder collaborative Home Grown, First 5 LA and Visión y Compromiso, will implement the Thriving Providers Project so twenty-five Friend, Family, and Neighbor (FFN) caregiving providers in Los Angeles County, living in or near fire-impacted areas, receive direct cash transfers of \$954 for a period of 18 months. The first cash transfer will be on February 15, 2026, and the last one on July 31, 2027. Applications closed in December 2025. In addition to specific LA Fires-impacted eligibility criteria for FFNs who were affected by wildfires, eligible FFNs met all the following requirements: Be 18 years or older, a resident of Los Angeles County, care for a child ages birth to 5 for an average of 15 hours per week, and have an individual FFN income of no more than \$24,000 annually.

This work builds on an ongoing demonstration project with the same partner organizations. The Thriving Providers Project (TPP) supports the economic stability of FFN providers with ongoing direct cash transfers to 25 FFN caregivers in Los Angeles County. Additionally, TPP offers optional training in key areas, including CPR/First Aid and child development. TPP recognizes that stabilizing the economic well-being of FFN providers is the most effective approach to improving caregiver well-being and enhancing the experiences

of children and families. Moreover, this work supports Visión y Compromiso's vision towards a healthy and dignified life for communities by providing concrete economic opportunities, thereby positively impacting the lives of young children and families.