

To all those affected by the LA fires

Our hearts are with you. At After the Fire USA, we are here for you as 3rd responders, supporting you from day one until everyone is home. Below, you'll find immediate resources we recommend to help you navigate this challenging time. You are not alone.

What can you do right now?

During this challenging time, there are critical ways you can help:

- **Evacuate Early.** Please encourage everyone to evacuate during a warning, not when it becomes mandatory. Delaying evacuation puts both evacuees and first responders at significant risk.
- **Avoid Unrequested Donations.** Only donate physical items if specifically requested. Unneeded donations can create logistical challenges and lead to a secondary disaster.
- **Conserve Water.** Advise locals to conserve water. In several areas, water supplies have run out, leaving fire hydrants unusable. Using water to protect individual homes often exacerbates the problem, leading to greater losses for the entire community.
- **Share Accurate Information.** Report disinformation and only share validated updates from official sources. Disinformation can spread confusion and harm during a crisis.
- **Focus on Support, Not Criticism.** Please reserve criticisms and unfounded speculations for another time. Let's avoid adding to the pain and suffering.

We asked for tips from many wildfire disaster survivors who want you to know they are here when and if you need them. They've created this list for you with love.

We Need to Talk...But How?

Two Way Radios: If you can get them and charge them, these are incredibly effective for communication, even months after the disaster as often cell phone towers remain down because they burn in wildfires.

HAM Radios: Yes, old school and very useful to communicate locally, regionally, nationally, and even globally.

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After the Fire USA is an initiative of Rebuild Northbay Foundation, a registered nonprofit (501c3 & 501c4). We help communities navigate wildfires across the American West. We collaborate with public officials (regional, state and federal), private sector, nonprofit community, and support community led and designed recovery.

EIN/TAX ID: 82-3266893

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Social Media: These platforms are wonderful in disaster, but can quickly become unwieldy for survivors and replete with misinformation. Consider also hosting a closed group for locals.

Slack: A free Slack license and training for those who have the bandwidth to run it – this is a short, mid and long-term solution. After megafires, people disperse wide and far. This platform allows for channels, moderations, vetting of information, and is trauma-informed as not everyone is ready for next steps at the same time. *Tip: Only allow fire survivor community members (or veteran survivors, if you wish) into the Slack. Information can be relayed to elected officials, press, contractors, etc. in other ways, but using information gleaned from channels.*



I Need Medications:

Inspect all drugs, especially if they have been exposed to heat, water, loss of refrigeration. If you are unsure, the [FDA](#) has a number to call: 1-888-463-6332.

You will need a process to obtain, distribute, refrigerate, and refill. If you do not see this in action and soon, contact your provider or request assistance at your Disaster Assistance Center. Do not go without your medications.

Cash Assistance:

Immediate cash assistance, especially with many jobs tied to house maintenance. This is the most flexible assistance. Cash is also

Local Economy: Once possible, support local businesses that survived. Otherwise, many will fail quite quickly and not return. Local economic vitality is key to social cohesion and recovery. This is another reason why CASH is important

What Can I Buy for Survivors? What Might I Need for Me?

Please only donate NEW items

Potable **Water** 

Backpacks

Pens + Accordion File Folders for holding new paperwork (absolute must)



Easy non-perishable foods.

Tip: If there is access to cooking (gas, BBQ) then consider culturally appropriate, healthy food kits in clear gallon Ziploc bags. For example, we made meal kits of tomatillos, onions, carrots, dried beans, rice, etc. and distributed them. Rotary compiled the kits for us.



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Basic Hygiene Kits that include:

Toothbrush + toothpaste, soap, shampoo + conditioner, feminine hygiene, adult and child diapers, hairbrush, comb, face wash, hair clips, makeup (basics), baby formula.



Basic NEW Clothing Items: Underwear, socks, shoes.



Kiddos:

Backpacks
Comfort items: stuffed animals, small blankets, etc.
Art Supplies
Books (small, portable)
Small toys



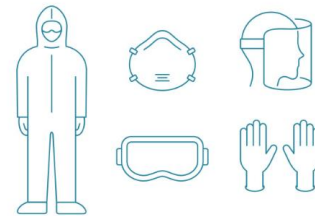
And for the Dogs? Cats? What can I buy?

Pet Food
Pet Meds
Leashes/Collars
Crates



If you wish to donate to a friend, please remember that animals cannot usually change their diet on the fly. Ask!

PPE: When it is time, sifters + gloves + N95 masks + goggles + dedicated shoes (ash is oily and toxic).



Do not try to sift until cleared.

How to Pay? How to Donate?

Preference is for gift credit cards and/or store cards as long as you *know* they exist on the island. DO NOT SEND GIFT CARDS THAT ARE UNUSABLE.

PRIORITIZE LOCAL ORGS FOR DONATIONS.

LA Fires: California Community Foundation is our recommendation.

<https://www.calfund.org/funds/wildfire-recovery-fund/>

Tip: Walmart and Target are two of the most useful cards because survivors can get everything in one place.

Amazon: Once deliveries are possible, encourage wish lists, registries.

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Where Can I Live?

FEMA will get a request for a “Housing Mission” from your county. But that process takes a while and the reality of rapid rehousing is not for everyone.

Tip: Start a Facebook page for those who have shelter to help those who need shelter. *Ours* was called “Keep them in Sonoma Valley” and did remarkably well.

AirBnB is opening up homes now in Los Angeles for fire survivors. Please avoid displacement of long-term rentals as we see evictions often after a fire.

Tip: Use a small team with high social trust to call and coordinate.

Navigating Insurance, Agencies, Processes:

Basic Needs: Backpacks + Pens + Accordion File Folders Preferably donated (see list above)

Insured Loss: United Policyholders (uphelp.org) will arrive.

Uninsured Loss / Renters: FEMA has an IA process. If you are denied, APPEAL and APPEAL again. Use the Local Assistance Center for help or see the number below.

Financial Navigation & Help: Fannie Mae has a free program for every impacted person to help with FEMA, SBA, HUD, insurance, credit cards, mortgages, etc. This service is long-term and open to every person in the community: 1-855-HERE2HELP (855-437-3243)

I Feel Overwhelmed and Sad. What Now?

This is normal and it feels terrible and surreal. It’s wonderful you have survived, but the grief of knowing others did not, the pain of seeing your home place blackened and charred is overwhelming.

Most people are wonderful and the love is in the air, but this does not make everything okay. We get it. This disaster is personal to you and your community, though also surreal because everyone is watching and the national + international news teams are on your streets. Soon, they will be gone and that will feel strange as well.

Look for the helpers who will stay with you for much longer than the cameras. You can do this. You really can. And we will be here with a vast network of survivors, navigators, policymakers, and more to walk alongside of you.

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Personalized help for homeowners & renters impacted by the California wildfires

Fannie Mae is committed to assisting homeowners, renters, and communities affected by the recent wildfires. If your home or place of employment was impacted, we can help you navigate the challenging recovery process through disaster recovery counseling at 855-HERE2HELP (855-437-3243).

Fannie Mae's disaster recovery counseling services offer free support from HUD-approved housing counselors, including:

- A personalized recovery assessment and action plan
- Assistance with debt relief including bills, credit cards, and mortgage or rent payments
- Help with claims and denials (i.e., FEMA, insurance, and Small Business Administration)
- Online disaster recovery forums, tools, and educational resources
- Ongoing check-ins to help ensure a successful recovery

Services are available in English, Spanish, and other languages



CALL 855-HERE2HELP
(855-437-3243)
Or visit FannieMae.com/HERE2HELP

Other resources

People impacted by a disaster may also receive help from:

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD): www.hud.gov
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA): www.disasterassistance.gov
- American Red Cross: **1-800-733-2767**

WARNING: Avoid scams

Scam artists offer fraudulent assistance to those affected by disasters. Always confirm the legitimacy of offers, never feel pressured to “take immediate action,” and, remember, mortgage help is FREE.

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Anxiety, irritability, fear, sadness, bad dreams – these are all normal responses to significant trauma. There is help. **SAMHSA has a toll-free number for this very post-disaster response: 1-800-985-5990 (Spanish press 2).**

SAMHSA has a non-competitive block grant program in concert with FEMA that provides funding for post-disaster mental health services. The good news: these can be (should be) designed and implemented locally. Your state will request this assistance. **Details**
<https://www.samhsa.gov/dtac>

*Tip: In Sonoma County, we were fortunate to have **Dr. Adrienne Heinz** work with the Northern Sonoma County Healthcare Foundation to design and implement a comprehensive Mental Health Care Collaborative. **Here is the entire program with templates, evaluations, forms, instructions:***
<https://med.stanford.edu/fastlab/sonoma.html>

*If you have any questions, please contact us at info@afterthefireusa.org or visit our website at <http://www.afterthefireusa.org>. You can also listen to our podcast, called “How to Disaster” on any podcast platform or watch it on YouTube. **There are over 70 episodes and many on wildfire.***

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