

MOTION BY SUPERVISORS KATHRYN BARGER AND
LINDSEY P. HORVATH

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**PRESERVING DISASTER CASE MANAGEMENT FOR EATON AND PALISADES
FIRE SURVIVORS**

More than twenty months after the Eaton and Palisades Fires, thousands of Altadena and Palisade Fire Area residents and surrounding households remain in active recovery. For many, a disaster case manager is one of the most important resources in that recovery: a single, trusted point of contact who helps survivors navigate insurance disputes, FEMA appeals, rental assistance, rebuild financing, benefits enrollment, and the many agencies and programs that make up the recovery system.

In early September, the State of California notified the providers of the federally funded Disaster Case Management Program (DCMP) for the 2025 Los Angeles wildfires, that the program would be forced to terminate on September 30, 2026, due to lack of FEMA funding. The State of California had requested \$26 million to operate the program. FEMA initially approved \$13 million but had only disbursed approximately \$3 million, leaving roughly \$10 million in approved funding unpaid. Last week, the State announced an extension of the deadline for the program to October 31, 2026.

On September 30, 2026, FEMA announced a partial payment of the unpaid funds and indicated that they would disburse an additional \$11 million to support the DCMP. However, until additional federal funds are received by the State, or an interim funding mechanism is identified, the DCMP could end more than fourteen months before its originally planned end date of January 8, 2028. More than 100 case management and support positions across the five DCMP organizations - Catholic Charities, CORE, Wylie Center, Little Tokyo Service Center, and Jewish Family Services LA - would be at risk. The FEMA funding to these groups will place a higher burden on non-FEMA funding organizations doing disaster case management work, like the Eaton Fire Collaborative or the Malibu Long Term Recovery Group to absorb the need.

The impact of a service interruption would fall particularly heavily on the Eaton Fire community. According to the Eaton Fire Collaborative’s (EFC) September 2026 DCMP Impact & Transition Planning briefing, as of August 31, 2026, DCMP has served 1,990 Eaton survivors and carries an estimated 1,084 open Eaton cases.

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HORVATH	_____
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BARGER	_____
SOLIS	_____

Altadena's 91001 ZIP Code alone accounts for 882 households in need of case management or on the waitlist, by far the largest concentration of need in the program. Eaton cases are also more complex, with 358 households designated as “Tier 4,” the highest-acuity tier and most at risk of falling into homelessness. In addition to DCMP, eight community-based disaster case management agencies are serving 879 active Eaton households, with another 348 households on their waitlists.

The conditions facing these households demonstrate the continued need for case management. More than two-thirds of triaged households remain in temporary housing, while only about one in ten have reached permanent housing. Roughly 61 percent had their homes destroyed, 54 percent were renters at the disaster address, and nearly 55 percent report being uninsured or underinsured. Among Eaton survivors, 45 percent identify financing as their primary barrier to recovery, 62 percent expect their recovery to take more than six additional months, 57 percent report a critical need for food and household necessities, and 55 percent report a need for immediate shelter, including households living in cars or couch surfing. Seventy-one percent have never filed a FEMA appeal. Those served also include a significant share of older adults, people with disabilities, and Spanish-speaking households who depend on in-language support.

In the Palisades Fire Areas, data from the Department of Angels July 2026 Report¹ showed that three out four Pacific Palisades residents and one in two of Malibu residents still are not home. Between 41 and 52% of survivors had drained their savings, and between 34 and 48% of survivors had taken on debt. 74% of Pacific Palisades survivors report worse mental health than before the fires.

An abrupt loss of case management could leave survivors without assistance at a critical point in their recovery, increasing the risk that households miss recovery deadlines, exhaust temporary housing assistance, or fall into homelessness. At the same time, existing programs across departments provide financial assistance, consumer and tenant protections, benefits enrollment, rebuild assistance, and other services that may help address identified survivor needs.

Working with 211 LA, the Eaton Fire Collaborative, the Long-Term Recovery Groups, existing DCMP providers, community-based disaster case management providers, and other partners can also help maintain clear points of entry and continuity of support for survivors during any interruption. The immediate priority is preventing households already in the system from falling through the cracks while federal or State funding is resolved, while assessing what level of County-supported bridge programming may be necessary to maintain critical services during any interruption.

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¹ Department of Angels, “Community Voices: LA Fire Recovery Report” July 2026

WE, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Board of Supervisors:

1. Direct the Chief Executive Office, in consultation with the Department of Homeless Services and Housing (HSH), the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), and the Los Angeles County Development Authority (LACDA), in coordination with the Office of Emergency Management (OEM), the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), and other relevant departments, and in collaboration with 211 LA, the Los Angeles County Affordable Housing Solutions Agency (LACAHS), the Eaton Fire Collaborative, and the Long-Term Recovery Groups, to report back to the Board in writing within 7 days with an assessment and recommendations on how the County could support continuity of disaster case management services for Eaton and Palisades Fire survivors in the event of a DCMP service interruption, including the appropriate scope and duration of any County-supported intervention. This report should include but not be limited to:
 - a. An analysis of the number of Eaton and Palisades Fire households at risk of losing case management, breakdowns of residents by acuity tier, including households on DCMP and community-based waitlists;
 - b. An assessment of existing County funding sources, contracts, and programs that could serve as an interim bridge to sustain critical case management services pending resolution of federal funding or State assistance, including the anticipated duration, cost, and service capacity of the potential bridge programming, along with potential philanthropic partnerships coordinated through the CEO's Center for Strategic Partnerships;
 - c. Recommendations on an entity that can serve as a centralized point of contact for survivors during any service interruption, including warm referrals, consistent public messaging, and minimizing survivor confusion;
 - d. An assessment of how existing County homelessness prevention, tenant protection, consumer protection, benefits enrollment, behavioral health, and rebuild programs, including the Altadena Rebuild Fund, can support the EFC transfer pathway and address identified survivor needs through referrals unmet needs assistance, rebuilding, and continued case management;

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- e. An assessment of the capacity of community-based disaster case management providers and the existing FEMA-funded DCMP providers to absorb transferred cases, and the resources necessary to expand that capacity, with priority for the estimated 400 to 500 cases that the Eaton Collaborative estimates may require continued case management;
 - f. Strategies to prioritize households at greatest risk of homelessness, including those reporting a need for immediate shelter or approaching the end of temporary housing assistance; and
 - g. Any data-sharing, consent, or case-transfer considerations necessary to ensure survivor records and case histories follow households across providers.
- 2. Direct DCBA, in consultation with LACAHSa and the CEO, to evaluate options to reprioritize some or some or all of the \$2M in grant funding previously provided to DCBA to provide legal services to support potential bridge programming, including the programmatic and service impacts of any proposed reallocation, and incorporate the assessment and recommendations into the report back by Directive 1. The report back should also identify any delegated authorities or other Board actions necessary to timely implement the recommended bridge programming. Additionally:
 - a. Report back on the feasibility of re-purposing and allocating \$1.5 million of the County's UA RPHP funds to provide funding for disaster case management services, including the programmatic and service impacts of any proposed reallocation
- 3. Direct the Chief Executive Office, through its Legislative Affairs and Intergovernmental Relations branch (CEO-LAIR), to prepare a five-signature letter to the FEMA Administrator urging the timely release of approved DCMP funds to protect continuity of care for Los Angeles wildfire survivors and a five-signature letter to the Governor requesting an interim funding mechanism to sustain the program through its originally planned end date of January 8, 2028.

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4. Direct the Chief Executive Office, through the Office of Emergency Management, to work with local nonprofits and community groups including CORE, Eaton Fire Residents United (EFRU), the Eaton Fire Collaborative, Catholic Charities, Wylie Center, Little Tokyo Service Center, Jewish Family Services LA, American Red Cross, and Malibu Long Term Recovery Group, to put forward recommendations in 90 days on how the County can better support and streamline disaster case management prior to and on the onset of future disasters.

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