



Chief Executive Office.

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Joseph M. Nicchitta

December 17, 2025

To: Supervisor Hilda L. Solis, Chair
Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Chair Pro Tem
Supervisor Lindsey P. Horvath
Supervisor Janice Hahn
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

From: Joseph M. Nicchitta


Joseph M. Nicchitta (Dec 16, 2025 18:41:45 PST)

Acting Chief Executive Officer

WILDFIRE RECOVERY ONE-YEAR LOOKBACK

January 7, 2026, marks one year since the Eaton and Palisades Fires reshaped communities across Los Angeles County (County), destroying or damaging thousands of homes, displacing families, disrupting local businesses, and tragically claiming 30 lives. In the past 12 months, communities have begun the process of recovering and rebuilding, demonstrating resilience, resolve, and a shared commitment to returning stronger and more prepared for the future. The scale of this loss continues to shape our communities and guide the County's efforts to accelerate rebuilding. As the region looks ahead to the next phase of recovery, the County and its partners must join together to work in new ways to support residents in taking on the significant work ahead in this rebuilding journey.

As debris removal neared completion six months ago, the County released *LA County Forward: Blueprint for Rebuilding*, a roadmap for recovery and reconstruction. The Blueprint outlines the County's commitment to taking action to support its residents and the need for an every-sector approach to recovery,



partnering with State and federal agencies, private industry, philanthropy, and community-based organizations, to advance progress on six priority pillars for community rebuilding:

1. Support a Feasible Financial Path to Return
2. Accelerate Permitting and Inspections
3. Grow the Pool of Builders and Materials to Achieve Scale and Lower Costs
4. Restore Critical Infrastructure
5. Mobilize the Workforce and Coordinate Delivery
6. Bring Back Everyday Services and Public Assets

In the last six months, the County has taken focused action to recognize and meet residents' needs in early rebuilding. This has included accelerating permitting times – now three times faster than pre-fires – deferring and reducing fees to save residents up to \$30,000, supporting dislocated workers, and disbursing over \$55 million to stabilize small businesses and restore essential services.

Progress to date across the blueprint's six key pillars

1. Support a feasible financial path to return

With high costs to rebuild and limited access to financing, many fire victims face financial barriers to rebuilding. In response, the County reduced upfront costs by deferring and refunding permitting fees, eliminating more than \$8 million in costs during construction. Over three quarters of fire-impacted parcels (18,597 parcels) received accelerated reassessments that can save homeowners \$3,000 to \$10,000 per year, depending on property value. The County has also worked to make ADUs and lot-splits a reality for over 800 residents who want to access the value in their land. While financing gaps persist, the County is committed to continuing to partner with the State, private industry, and philanthropic partners to broaden access to capital, so residents can return home.

2. Accelerate permitting and inspections

Making permitting and inspections accessible, efficient, and predictable is essential for residents and their rebuild teams to make concrete plans to return. As of December 11, 2025, over 950 households have permits to begin rebuilding, and five County families have received certificates of occupancy to move home. To make the process easier to navigate, the County has set up Express Lanes¹ to accelerate permit review, surged plan check and inspection capacity, and deployed 140 trained case managers to provide personalized

¹ <https://recovery.lacounty.gov/express-lane-for-rebuilding/>

guidance to residents. These measures have tripled the efficiency of permit processing compared to pre-fire levels, reducing the average County review time to under 30 business days.

3. Grow the pool of builders and materials

To give every resident and property owner a real, affordable path to rebuild, the County has been seeking ways to expand and diversify the pool of builders and materials available in order to drive down the cost of construction, given that construction can account for up to 65 percent of total rebuild cost. Through its pre-approved plan platform, developed in partnership with Can I Build², the County is connecting homeowners to pre-approved designs and builders, expanding access to affordable options, and simplifying the design process. The County is also partnering with the private sector to offer discounts on key materials and identifying potential staging depots to improve coordinated delivery and reduce congestion in rebuild areas.

4. Restore critical infrastructure

Essential infrastructure—like water, gas, power, and internet—is the foundation of the rebuilding and recovery effort. One of the most important roles the County can play in helping homeowners, renters, and businesses is facilitating the delivery of the public services they cannot provide for themselves. In partnership with the State and SoCal Edison (SCE), the County is supporting plans for undergrounding more than 150 miles across the burn scars to reduce future fire risk. To support the permitting of residences, the County has temporarily aligned fire code to State standards for fire flow and has supported residents to meet those standards so they can begin rebuilding. Alongside these efforts, the County has been planning for rebuilding at scale and has developed an infrastructure database in Geographic Information System to support coordination of infrastructure rebuilding and the development of a master plan and rebuild schedule in 2026.

5. Mobilize the workforce and coordinate delivery

At peak rebuilding, we anticipate as many as 45,000 workers contributing to the rebuild across the Palisades and Eaton burn scars. Addressing a surge in labor demand and compressed construction schedules will require support to expand and upskill the workforce, improve employer-worker matching, and extend working hours to accelerate reconstruction. In response, the County invested \$20 million across the Fire Recovery and Resilience Workforce Program (FRRWP) and the LA Region Worker Relief Fund that together provided direct relief to 3,000 workers through cash assistance and immediate hiring and training

² <https://recovery.lacounty.gov/rebuilding/plans-portal/>

support. In parallel, the County set up the Altadena Job Center and hosted job fairs to support local dislocated and impacted workers, including supporting community youth. The County is also partnering with community college and trade partners to expand construction-training pipelines, investing \$7 million of the County's High Road Training Partnership (H RTP) fund into rebuilding-related programs. With community input, extended construction hours were implemented to support an accelerated rebuild.

6. Bring back everyday services and public assets

For residents, community return includes more than just restoring homes; it means bringing back the daily services and community assets that make neighborhoods livable: schools, clinics, grocery stores, places of worship, child care, small businesses, parks, and vibrant commercial corridors. The reopening of treasured community assets, Loma Alta Park and Triangle Park, represent one step forward in restoring community centers. The County also supported continuity of education by relocating fire-affected school campuses to temporary facilities. Over \$17 million has been disbursed by the County to support thousands of local businesses with interim operations and rebuilding. The County has also pursued creative programs like the "Shop Local. Dine Local. Recover Local." Campaign and Shop Local LA County Gift Card Program to stimulate local commercial activity. Progress on additional anchor assets continues, though delays in insurance payouts and federal funding remain a constraint.

Path forward

As we enter the next phase of rebuilding, the County remains committed to supporting residents and working with partners with the urgency, coordination, and resources this moment requires.

Delivering on these objectives will not be possible without funding from the State and federal government and ongoing coordination between the County and State and local governments, private industry, philanthropy, community organizations, residents, local businesses and others. Delays in timely support are slowing the rebuilding critical infrastructure, prolonging the displacement of families and impacting small business and economic recovery.

Residents still face real financial gaps to return, and there remains a risk of long-term community displacement and loss of community wealth. Wildfire rebuilding funding, including increased access to lending at affordable rates, is needed to stem this tide. The California Rebuilding Fund, created during the pandemic, represents a model that raised public, private and philanthropic funds to deliver low-interest loans to thousands of small businesses. Continued creativity and partnership from

lenders and the State will be needed to meet the needs of residents and revitalize the economy.

The County recognizes the role rebuilding critical infrastructure alongside commercial and residential rebuilding plays in accelerating community return and recovery. Thus, planning and delivery must accelerate to rebuild critical infrastructure, coordinating and sequencing utility undergrounding, stormwater, road and public projects. While federal and other funds like Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District may become available over time, immediate, one-time resources are needed to support these activities.

Reconstruction will also require a strong and well-coordinated workforce and partnering across community colleges, workforce boards, apprenticeship providers, and more to identify and train the workforce to be well positioned to support the rebuild projects to come. In parallel, there is an ongoing need to support local small businesses and their employees, with plans underway to develop and implement a tailored commercial recovery strategy that helps stabilize local corridors and support the economy.

Together, we will work to support and advocate for our impacted communities as they recover—not only replacing what was lost but helping rebuild neighborhoods that are stronger, safer, and more resilient. With shared purpose, expanded partnership, and sustained commitment, we can help residents return home and support communities to move forward.

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Attachments

- c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors
- County Counsel
- Assessor
- Economic Opportunity
- Fire
- Internal Services
- Public Works
- Regional Planning
- Treasurer and Tax Collector
- Los Angeles County Development Authority

Data as of 12/16/25

Wildfire Recovery LA County Blueprint for Rebuilding



One Year Look Back / Look Ahead



Blueprint for Rebuilding | Priorities for reconstruction



Support a feasible financial path to return

Lowering upfront costs to make it more affordable for residents to return

Helping families and businesses **access needed financial support** to cover gaps



Accelerate permitting and inspections

Scaling plan checkers and inspectors to stay ahead of demand

Streamlining the process and providing support so people can rebuild sooner



Grow the pool of builders and materials to achieve scale

Supporting the scale up of builders to give residents options and reduce costs

Coordinating **materials supply** to reduce bottlenecks and manage surges



Restore critical infrastructure

Making sure homes have timely **access to utility services** such as water, gas, power, and internet

Working with utilities to build back **more modern, reliable, and resilient infrastructure**



Mobilize the workforce and coordinate delivery

Supporting the training and hiring of more workers to fill gaps

Helping **coordinate logistics and delivery** to speed rebuilding and reduce bottlenecks



Bring back everyday services and public assets

Accelerating the return of essential services, like child care and healthcare, to support resident return

Rebuilding critical public infrastructure, like parks and schools, to make neighborhoods livable



Support a Feasible Financial Path to Return

What we're solving for

- **Lowering upfront costs** to make it more affordable for residents to return (e.g., waive requirements, keep taxes down, unlock equity)
- Helping families and businesses **access needed financial support** to cover gaps (e.g., activate lenders / wildfire fund, navigation support, insurability)

Progress to date

- A Reduced upfront rebuilding costs:** Deferred and refunded over \$8M¹ in permitting fees for single-family home rebuilds, as much as \$30K per home
- B Unlocked property equity:** Simplified access to land-use pathways and flexed zoning requirements to enable residents to access the value in their land through ADUs & lot splits; to date, 32% of rebuilding applications include an ADU, representing 872 total ADU applications¹
- C Expedited property tax relief:** Reassessed and lowered tax bills for 18,597 parcels¹, saving homeowners of damaged or destroyed properties \$3,000–\$10,000 per year
- E Supported mortgage relief:** Supported passage of the [Mortgage Forbearance Act \(AB 238\)](#) to protect borrowers from late fees, penalties, extra interest, foreclosure proceedings, and credit impacts

Looking ahead

- **Expand affordable financing options:** Continue collaborating with private industry (including California Bankers Association members) and the State to expand offerings for financial pathways to rebuilding, including additional construction financing options and potential for a Wildfire Rebuilding Fund
- **Expand property tax relief:** Continue exploring strategies to support fixed- and middle-income households and original owners who rebuild affordable rental units
- **Support financial navigation:** Target education to ensure at-risk groups understand and can access available financial supports (e.g., navigation of construction loan process)

1. As of 12/16/25.



Accelerate permitting and inspections

What we're solving for

- **Expanding fast tracks** and optimizing permit and inspection turnaround timelines
- Activating **surge capacity**
- Connecting residents and businesses to **trusted rebuild navigators**

Progress to date

- **H Accelerated permit approvals:** Approved 1,032 permits¹ with an average County review time under 30 business days, 3x faster than pre-fire rates; 208¹ users of Archistar eCheck, with up 51% time¹ savings for initial plan reviews
- **H Created a faster rebuilding path:** Launched the Express Lanes for Rebuilding, including 77 pre-approved styles¹, bundled plan review, and contractor self-certification
- **I Scaling capacity:** Scaled to 40 plan checkers and 6 building inspectors¹ across DPW and DRP, and secured contracted inspector support
- **J Delivered dedicated resident navigation support:** Expanded rebuild navigator program with ~140 trained case managers¹ prepared to provide personalized guidance to 1500+ contacted residents¹

Looking ahead

- **Reduce permitting timeline:** Reduce recheck rates, increase utilization of express lanes (e.g., pre-approved plans, bundled projects, self-certification, pre-fabricated structures), and continue to reduce time that permits are under County review
- **Scale for 2026 permit and inspection demand:** Build capacity to handle 2,500+ permit apps in the first half of 2026 through expanded staffing, contracted planners, and increased virtual inspections
- **Develop Small Business and Commercial Property Concierge Program** approved by the Board in December 2025

1. As of 12/16/25.



Grow the Pool of Builders and Materials

What we're solving for

- Increasing access to **affordable plans and contractors**
- Fostering an environment that **attracts a diversity of builders**
- Connecting residents to **affordable options to rebuild** (e.g., modular, cost to build pre-approved plans)
- Coordinating the **supply of materials and materials management** (e.g., depots)

Progress to date

- **K Launched pre-approved plan portal:** Launched [pre-approved plan portal](#) with Can I Build to connect residents with vetted builders; portal has 33 pre-approved plans with 77 styles¹
- **L Partnered to support predictable materials delivery:** Prioritized potential available State sites for staging of materials for community input in 2026
- **L Coordinated with builders to support delivery at scale:** Reviewed plans for pre-approval and developed an express lane for bundled permits for multiple rebuilds

Looking ahead

- **Expand builder participation:** Support diverse builder ecosystem, partnering to manage speed to permit and inspect
- **Increase resident plan and pricing options:** Broaden plan offerings and add transparent pricing to preserve resident choice and protect against price gouging
- **Stand up staging depots:** Monitor need for staging depots in partnership with suppliers to minimize traffic and support rapid reconstruction at scale
- **Ensure availability & stabilize prices:** Coordinate on approaches to maximize material availability and manage costs (e.g., supplier discounts, coordinated purchasing)

1. As of 12/16/25.



Restore critical infrastructure

What we're solving for

- Coordinating a **delivery model for undergrounding** / joint trenching
- Advancing **water system restoration** plans
- Creating **master plan and schedule for delivery**

Progress to date

- **M Set ambition and plan for undergrounding at scale:** In partnership with State and So Cal Edison, developed plan to underground ~150 miles in the burn scars; established a pave once policy
- **N Supported residents to meet fire code requirements to get permitted:** Worked with individual homeowners to meet fire code requirements, including developing alternative measures to address fire flow issues
- **O Developed a GIS infrastructure database:** Developed navigation tool for existing and planned utility, undergrounding, power, road, stormwater to support unified planning across agencies

Looking ahead

- **Finalize undergrounding delivery path:** E.g., partnering with utility partners, joint paving, coordinated deliver, home connections, etc.
- **Develop a master plan and delivery schedule:** Identify and prioritize critical infrastructure, sequencing infrastructure rebuild by zone to accelerate timeline, minimize costs of paving/rework, and proactively manage ingress/egress
- **Develop cost-effectiveness strategies for cost of resilient critical infrastructure:** Look for ways to knit together State and federal resources, including FEMA Public Assistance and Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery, and local funds to accelerate critical infrastructure and resilience upgrades

Progress to date

- Q Deployed immediate financial assistance:** Awarded \$23.4M in direct relief, including \$5.8M to 2,892 workers¹; supported 1,642 workers¹ at Disaster Recovery Centers
- Q Created a new Altadena Job Center:** Stood up a new [Job Center in Altadena](#) to create a dedicated physical presence in the community to support impacted workers and businesses
- Q Supported dislocated workers:** Secured \$14.2M for Fire Recovery and Resilience Program with 198 enrollments to date¹
- Q Initiated training for surge workforce to rebuild:** Invested ~\$7M in High Road Training Partnership grants that provide additional capacity to support wildfire rebuild and recovery
- R Accelerated construction productivity:** Extended construction hours to speed progress while balancing community considerations

Looking ahead

- Scale construction training for rebuild:** Expand construction training and apprenticeships through deeper partnerships with community colleges, training providers, trades organizations, and registered apprenticeship providers
- Support workforce talent attraction:** Explore ways to get more qualified construction workers on the ground, including transportation stipends, cross-country convenings, and better coordination across workforce, education, economic, and community organizations
- Facilitate job matching and placement:** Develop a platform and/or streamlined process to better facilitate job matching between builders and trained workers



Mobilize the Workforce and Coordinate Delivery

What we're solving for

- **Expanding and upskilling** the workforce
- Linking **employers and available workers**
- **Extending working hours** to speed reconstruction



Bring Back Everyday Services and Public Assets

What we're solving for

- Identifying **priority assets for early deployment**
- Accelerating the **reopening of community and commercial services**

Progress to date

- **Deployed immediate financial relief for businesses:** Awarded \$23.4M in direct relief, including \$17.7M to 2,181 small businesses and nonprofits¹; supported 2,482 businesses¹ at the Disaster Recovery Centers and connected them to SBA loans
- **Activated commercial rebuild and recovery in impacted corridors:** Kicked off the [“Shop Local. Dine Local. Recover Local.”](#) campaign and Shop Local LA County Gift Card Program to revive essential goods and services and support local commercial property owners and businesses
- **Reopened core community assets:** Began restoring treasured public spaces, including [Loma Alta Park](#) and Triangle Park, to support early community return
- **Supported student continuity:** Ensured fire-affected students could return to learning through temporary campus relocations that preserved access to education

Looking ahead

- **Increase transparency and resident confidence:** Build a unified tracking system with expanded public reporting to monitor progress and encourage resident return
- **Address operational barriers:** Partner with departments and community leaders to support and remove roadblocks to reopening plans, across a range of community assets from schools, parks, faith venues, and child care providers
- **Develop commercial corridor strategy:** Finalize and implement a tailored return plan for commercial corridors, including focused support for businesses and property owners, to support the return of over 200 fire-affected businesses

1. As of 12/16/25.



Preserve Community. Rebuild Sustainably. Return Equitably.

What the Blueprint for Rebuilding Means for You (December 2025)

- **Mortgage relief:** [Mortgage Forbearance Act \(AB 238\)](#) extends forbearance for fire-affected homeowners and codifies borrower protections from late fees, extra interest, foreclosure proceedings, and credit impacts
- **Property equity opportunities:** Residents can access the value in their land through ADUs and lot splits, through simplified land-use pathways and more flexible zoning requirements. To date, 32% of rebuilding applications include an ADU, representing 872 total applications.
- **Accelerated permit review times:** Average time spent in County review is now under 30 days, 3x faster than pre-fire rates
- **Express lanes for rebuilding:** [Express lane for rebuilding](#) options are expanded for residents and builders through [65+ pre-approved plans](#), [self-certification for contractors](#), and [bundled permit reviews](#), accelerating the rebuild process and restoring residents as quickly as possible
- **Rebuild Navigators support:** In partnership with community based organizations (CBOs), ~140 case managers are connecting with residents to provide personalized guidance on [rebuild navigation](#)
- **Pre-approved plan portal:** The [web platform](#) is available to connect residents with available pre-approved plans, adjusted to their parcel, and licensed builders to support rebuilds
- **Workforce support:** The [Altadena Job Center](#) is now open; so far, 194 residents supported with enrollments through [Fire Recovery and Resilience Workforce Program](#), and 189 youth accessing paid work experience through [Youth@Work](#) to help restore the workforce
- **Continuity of education:** Students were able to return to school following the fires thanks to collaboration between the County, LAUSD, Pasadena USD, and charter schools to create a return plan with temporary relocations and rebuild strategies; rebuilding is underway for some campuses, with Palisades Charter High School anticipating return to original location on 1/12/2026 after suffering significant damage from the fires
- **Commercial recovery support:** \$55M of commercial recovery funding is supporting local businesses affected by the fires through grants to support interim operations and rebuilding and through expansion of the [“Shop Local. Dine Local. Recover Local.”](#) campaign to stimulate activity for fire-affected businesses



Preserve Community. Rebuild Sustainably. Return Equitably.

How the County will continue to support recovery in the coming months

- **Affordable financing options:** Collaborate with private industry (including California Bankers Association members) and the State to support expanded access to financing, helping residents bridge the gap between insurance payouts and rebuild costs so rebuilding is in reach
- **Additional permit and inspection capacity:** Increase permitting and inspection capacity and support use of express lanes to decrease time spent in County review and accelerate turnaround times
- **Expanded pre-approved plan portal:** Increase pre-approved plan availability and include pricing options and builder availability to help residents make decisions based on their budgets
- **Undergrounding delivery:** Advance delivery plans for over 150 miles of undergrounding, maximizing resiliency for residents with State, utility, and telecom partners
- **Coordinated master plan:** Develop master plan and rebuild schedule to coordinate delivery of rebuild projects, minimize disruptions from rework, and mitigate traffic congestion
- **Scaled training and job matching programming:** Deepen partnerships with community colleges, trade organizations, and apprenticeship providers to support workforce growth via expanded training and job matching
- **Commercial recovery strategy:** Implement tailored commercial recovery strategy to support return of commercial corridors; develop Small Business and Commercial Property Concierge Program to offer permitting, financing, and contracting support for business owners