

The Access and Functional Needs (AFN) Minute

February 21, 2025

Welcome!

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Message from the Chief



L. Vance Taylor and Roxann Crawford (FEMA) presenting on integrating AFN into Recovery

All,

We are proud of the collaborative work that has, and continues to happen, in support of individuals with access and functional considerations who have been impacted by the Southern California wildfires. The incredible efforts of our partners reinforce California's commitment to addressing the needs of underserved and disproportionately impacted communities.

To ensure whole community considerations were identified, addressed, and embedded throughout the response phase of the

disaster, the Cal OES Office of Access and Functional Needs (OAFN) activated in the State Operations Center, engaging in efforts such as:

- Working with the California Department of Social Services to incorporate physical and programmatic access at shelters.
- Conducting outreach to community-based organizations serving individuals with access and functional needs.
- Supporting effective communication by facilitating the inclusion and integration of American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters at state media events such as press conferences, town halls, and webinars.
- Briefing the Cal OES State AFN Advisory Committee on wildfire, weather, response, and sheltering information and engaging with them about unmet needs.
- Partnering to assist families with sensory-related considerations by making disaster response environments more welcoming.

It cannot be stressed enough that this work does not happen in isolation. Partnership takes coordination, collaboration, and trust. It takes the whole community.

Thank you for working with us on this mission!

-Vance

L. Vance Taylor

Chief, Office of Access and Functional Needs

California Governor's Office of Emergency Services

2025 Wildfire Recovery Resources

THREE WAYS
to apply for disaster assistance

VISIT
disasterassistance.gov

DOWNLOAD
the FEMA app

CALL
800-621-FEMA (3362)

FEMA

An image indicating there are three ways to apply for disaster assistance. Visiting disasterassistance.gov, using the FEMA app, or

As survivors of the Los Angeles County wildfires work to navigate their way through the recovery process, an essential starting point to restoring and rebuilding is registering for federal assistance through FEMA. The deadline for doing so is **Monday, March 10, 2025**.

FEMA's Individual Assistance Programs provide eligible individuals and households with financial support to help meet their basic needs. FEMA support may include reimbursement for things such as:

- Temporary housing
- Home repairs
- Personal property losses
- Medical and dental expenses related to the disaster
- Childcare; and
- Other serious disaster-related needs not covered by insurance.

FEMA assistance is not taxed, will not affect Social Security, Medicaid or other federal benefits, and do not need to be repaid.

Ways to apply for FEMA Individual Assistance:

- Online at DisasterAssistance.gov (fastest option).
- On the [FEMA App](#) (via the Apple App Store or Google Play).
- By phone on the FEMA Helpline at **800-621-3362**. If you use a relay service, give FEMA your number for that service. Helpline operators speak many languages: press 2 for Spanish or press 3 for an interpreter who speaks your language. Lines are open from **7:00am to 10:00pm 7 days a week**.
- At one of the following Disaster Recovery Center locations:
 - **Altadena**
540 W Woodbury Rd
Altadena, CA 91001
Open everyday 9:00 AM - 7:00 PM
 - **UCLA Research Park**
10850 W Pico Blvd
Los Angeles, CA 90064
Open everyday 9:00 AM - 7:00 PM

For a video in American Sign Language on how to apply for FEMA assistance, visit [FEMA Accessible: Three Ways to Register for FEMA Disaster Assistance](#).

Joint Field Office Deployments and Operations



OAFN staff member Mary Rothgeb with California Governor Gavin Newsom at the Joint Field Office in Pasadena.

To support individuals impacted by the Southern California wildfires, state and federal partners are working together in Pasadena at a multiagency command center called a Joint Field Office (JFO).

OAFN staff are deployed and embedded at the JFO to ensure the needs of survivors with access and functional considerations are integrated throughout all areas of the operation, .

The JFO is the hub for local, state, and federal agencies serving on the Housing Task Force to support survivors in emergency shelters as they transition into more permanent housing solutions. This includes the facilitation of services to aid survivors as they seek accessible apartments and homes.

The JFO team is working to ensure Disaster Recovery Centers are accessible, offering assistive technology accommodations and other needed supports to ensure all survivors can apply for federal aid, housing, or other local, state, and non-profit resources.

The JFO amplifies accessible messaging for survivors throughout the whole community in multiple languages and in 508 compliant formats. This helps ensure that all survivors receive vital, timely, and accessible information about available services and resources.

OAFN will continue working with partners at the JFO to assist survivors with access and functional needs as they strive to recover from the wildfires.



Image of a yellow sign that reads 'Storm Season Ahead'.

To promote safety and security throughout the whole community in the face of flash flooding, debris flows, and storms, check out Cal OES' [Storm Season Safety: Considerations for People with Access and Functional Needs](#).

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