

Home ([//Www.Chinadaily.Com.Cn](http://Www.Chinadaily.Com.Cn)) / World ([//Www.Chinadaily.Com.Cn/World](http://Www.Chinadaily.Com.Cn/World)) /

Americas 

LA fire survivors seek relief at disaster centers

By RENA LI in Los Angeles | chinadaily.com.cn | Updated: 2025-01-15 11:25



A view shows the remains of a car and homes burned by the Palisades Fire, in the Pacific Palisades neighborhood in Los Angeles, California, US Jan 14, 2025. [Photo/Agencies]

Los Angeles County continues to confront the devastation caused by the Palisades and Eaton wildfires, with efforts focused on aiding displaced residents and containing the blazes.

A collective wave of support has emerged; two disaster recovery centers, established at UCLA Research Park West and the Pasadena City College Community Education Center, opened on Tuesday to serve as critical hubs for recovery.

"These fires were very devastating, but we know that there's a lot of people coming in here that have lost a lot, and so we're here to offer all the help that we can," said Davina Mates of the California Office of Emergency Services, in an interview with China Daily.

Firefighters are racing to strengthen containment lines ahead of forecasted strong winds. The National Weather Service has extended its extreme red flag warning, emphasizing the risk of rapid fire spread in vulnerable areas.

Due to weaker-than-expected winds, however, forecasters lifted the "particularly dangerous situation" fire weather warning for Los Angeles and Ventura counties on Tuesday afternoon. But the winds are anticipated to strengthen again, and the warning will be reinstated before dawn on Wednesday.

The recovery centers serve as a "one-stop shop" for disaster survivors. Individuals can apply for and register for help with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), as well as visit the Small Business Administration to apply for low-interest or no-interest loans.

Various agencies such as the DMV, social services, and other community support organizations are available to assist residents affected by the fires, said Michael Allen from FEMA.

"We've already had over 27,000 people registered for assistance, and we've provided more than \$5 million in grants to those people," Allen told China Daily.

The Palisades Fire, which has burned more than 24,000 acres, is now 25 percent contained, while the Eaton Fire has scorched approximately 15,000 acres, with containment improving to 45 percent.

The fires have claimed 25 lives, and 37 people are still missing. Authorities also are working to identify two deceased victims.

"The death toll is likely to rise as recovery efforts progress," said Los Angeles Police Department Chief Jim McDonnell.

The wildfires, among the most destructive in US history, have prompted calls for sustained support and recovery efforts. The disaster has left thousands without homes, upended communities, and strained local resources to their limits.

Critics said long-term recovery will require not only immediate relief but also significant investment in rebuilding infrastructure, improving fire-prevention measures and addressing broader issues such as housing affordability and climate resilience.

Housing shortages have intensified in the wake of the fires, leaving families scrambling for accommodations.

"Every time I call somebody about a listing, I break into tears," said Tina Poppy, whose Altadena home was destroyed. Reports of landlords raising rents significantly have further strained the housing crisis.

Despite those challenges, officials remained steadfast in their commitment to recovery. "The resources won't run out. They can come on a day that works for them and get the help that they need," Mates added.

California Governor Gavin Newsom and Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass have implemented measures to accelerate recovery.

They both issued executive orders to expedite rebuilding and debris removal.

Newsom signed an executive order on Tuesday to ease the process for schools to use temporary facilities and allow displaced students to attend schools outside their district.

On Monday, the governor asked the state Legislature to approve \$2.5 billion for response and recovery efforts.

Support for food and beverage workers has been bolstered by the Restaurants Care Relief Grants, offering up to \$1,500.

"We want to ensure that those who have lost their homes or workplaces due to these fires are not left without support," said a representative from the California Restaurant Foundation.

Political debates over federal aid have added complexity to the recovery. With President-elect Donald Trump preparing to take office on Monday, a partisan battle in Washington looms over continued relief funding.

House Speaker Mike Johnson suggested that California's liberal policies could complicate the approval of additional resources.

Approximately 17,000 Los Angeles Department of Water and Power customers in Pacific Palisades, Encino and Brentwood were still without power as of Tuesday, the utility reported.

Wen Siyuan in Los Angeles and agencies contributed to the story.



Copyright 1995 - 2025. All rights reserved. The content (including but not limited to text, photo, multimedia information, etc) published in this site belongs to China Daily Information Co (CDIC). Without written authorization from CDIC, such content shall not be republished or used in any form.