



Thomas Fire Recovery Update One Year Later

Community members and organizations of all kinds have come together to assist in recovery efforts over the past year. The Ventura County Long Term Disaster Recovery Group (VC LTDRG) was created in early 2018 out of the catalytic efforts of FEMA, Ventura County Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VC VOAD), and California Office of Emergency Services as a coordinating body for a collaboration of non-profit organizations, government agencies, faith-based and community-led groups as well as local businesses and philanthropy to maximize available resources for recovery and simplify assistance for residents impacted by the Thomas Fire. More than fifty organizations have taken part helping households in Ventura County fulfill their recovery goals and achieve sustainability post-Thomas fire.

The Woolsey/Hill Fires in November 2018 reminded us all of the importance of a strong, connected network of organizations who want to help. Therefore, the VC LTDRG immediately began discussions of how to leverage the lessons and infrastructure developed over the past year to assist more recent Ventura County residents impacted by the 2018 wildfires as well as create a framework that can sustain community resiliency efforts.

Answering Unmet Needs

VC LTDRG member organizations have provided money, materials, and services to aid the recovery of Thomas Fire impacted individuals and families – cooperatively working to identify unmet needs, develop recovery plans, and distribute resources. Assistance has taken various forms including: disaster case management, mental health services, temporary rental assistance, the provision or purchase of essential appliances or household goods, support for rebuilding and structural repairs needed to ensure safe, sustainable, stable housing as well as clearing of brush or debris from property.



Connecting to resources

Four Disaster Case Managers working out of three local agencies (Jewish Family Service, The Salvation Army, UMCOR805)* have served as the main point of contact connecting residents affected by a disaster to the resources available to them including private and governmental resources and funding for items that include but are not limited to food and housing, as well as household goods, financial assistance, and volunteer labor, to help rehabilitate or reconstruct their homes.

2-1-1 Ventura is has served as the hub for community outreach with 24/7 access by phone or online to specialists that direct residents to local recovery resources and information – including registration with the VC LTDRG.

Additionally, partners have organized events and leveraged social media to provide information and support to impacted community members.

*Help of Ojai also participated in coordinated case management through June 2018



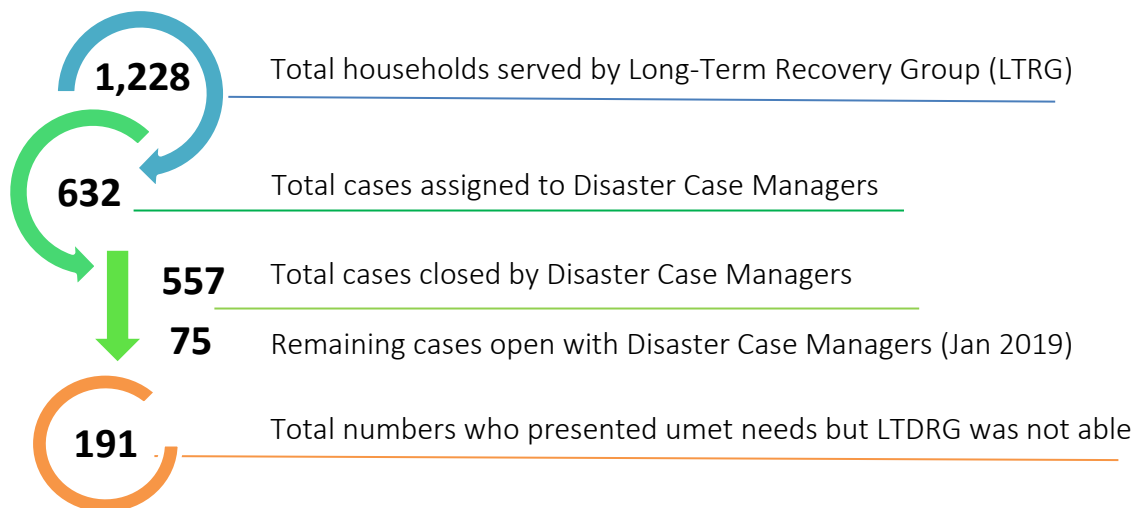
Financial assistance

Local funders including the Salvation Army, United Way of Ventura County and Ventura County Community Foundation pooled dollars designated for individual long-term recovery as participants in the VC LTDRG's Allocation Table. VC LTDRG financial assistance is intended as a last stop - to fill gaps after federal, insurance and other recovery sources have provided support. Disaster case managers present requests for clients based on their recovery plan and unmet needs. Funders contribute to collectively respond to the client needs. Priority consideration has been given to vulnerable populations who do not have adequate personal resources to support unmet disaster caused needs because of the disaster.

As of January 2019, the Allocation Table process has funded Ventura County residents impacted by the disaster with more than \$260,000. Case managers will continue to present cases to support unmet needs and distribute remaining funds. Currently, cases that are in various stages of rebuild are estimated to require more than \$800,000 in support from LTDRG Allocation Table supporters. There are additional cases that are not yet at a stage where all known costs have been determined.

Many of the individual partner organizations have provided additional financial support in the past year to impacted households through separate processes and criteria. The VC LTDRG has worked to ensure information about each funding opportunity was shared widely among partners communicating with survivors and worked to streamline verification of impact.

A summary of one year of coordinated recovery support



Commitment in the long run

Recovery experts know that issues and challenges for survivors are not limited to the weeks and months following a disaster. Recovery from a disaster takes time, for individuals, families and for all impacted in the community. The work continues – supporting families as they navigate the rebuilding process, secure permanent housing, and heal. The VC LTDRG is committed to be responsive to community recovery needs recognizing that recovery is a multi-year process.

More information on the continuing efforts and community partners can be found at:

www.VCDisasterRecoveryGroup.org