



Food Forward's LA Wildfire Update

February 6, 2025

This January, Los Angeles experienced a crisis like no other in our lifetime. Our team members, families, colleagues, and communities have endured profound loss and upheaval. The unprecedented fires, which raged for weeks, are now out. Still, our city is now grappling with the aftermath of this tragedy.

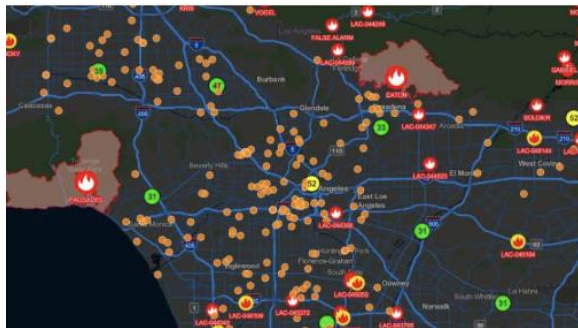
Food Forward, with your invaluable support, continues to meet the needs of our communities, especially those affected by the wildfires. Your generosity, along with that of other supporters and produce donors, enabled us to distribute over 9,000,000 pounds of fresh produce in the past 31 days, **a 40% increase over January 2024.**

A special thanks to produce donors like Taylor Farms and Generous Brands, whose generosity bolstered our ability to respond swiftly. Their donations of fresh produce and financial support helped ensure that people in disaster areas received the nourishment they needed during this critical time.

Our rapid response has not gone unnoticed:

"The speed and agility with which Food Forward responded to increased needs was truly remarkable. Seeing this organization pivot and expand in real time has been nothing short of inspiring."

-Reba Rosenthal
Chief of Staff, Generous Brands



Our ability to thoughtfully respond in real time was made possible in part by our innovative mapping developed with support from Novo Nordisk Inc. This tool enabled us to quickly identify fire-affected agencies so we could reach out with increased food supply.



Our partnership with the National Day Laborers Organizing Network was a standout example of our expanded reach. With increased donations, we provided fresh fruits and vegetables as well as hygiene kits donated by Kaiser Permanente to individuals in fire-adjacent areas.

Food Forward is dedicated to long-term recovery and ensuring surplus fresh food reaches those who most need it and reaches them with dignity. We are deeply grateful for the unwavering support of our donors, volunteers, and partners, who make our work possible. We invite you to check out our [volunteer calendar](#) or [donate](#) and join us in continuing to show up and make a difference!

In community,
The Food Forward Team

P.S. We have heard from several in our community with concerns about whether the ash and residue from the fires harming their fruits and vegetables? [Our friends at KCRW have answers.](#)

[Donate](#)

Food Forward's LA Wildfire Update

January 22, 2025

In hopes of keeping our Food Forward community updated on our wildfire short-term assistance, as well as the transition into longer term recovery efforts, you will notice we are reaching out more frequently. We heard from many that this sort of brief update was helpful, and hopeful, during a time when we all remain on edge and want to stay connected.

We knew two weeks ago that Food Forward would be needed as part of relief efforts for the LA wildfires, but how much we'd be needed was unclear. That was crystalized when last week, on top of our normally scheduled partner distributions, Food Forward staff, volunteers, and our produce and facilities were mobilized across the region. In just one 48-hour period we:



Distributed fruits and vegetables as a lead partner in the [Los Angeles Rams "LA Strong"](#) mega-distribution for thousands of fire evacuees.



Supplied 100% of the produce for a **UCLA community emergency distribution feeding** hundreds of displaced students.



Coordinated building hundreds of **produce care packages for first responders**, which were delivered to command posts by The Produce Ambassador and produce partner, Westfalia.



Supplied needed hand fruit for a child and family event organized by **LA county at the LA Arboretum** for over a thousand attendees affected by the Eaton Fire.

To supply these tens of thousands of pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables for relief efforts, we redeployed staff and pivoted some operations. We have been using new internal mapping technology to pinpoint our agencies within the fire zones that needed and could handle additional produce beyond their normal allotments. And we did this while maintaining our ongoing distributions to partners throughout the region.

We continue to work with city, county, nonprofit, and corporate partners to keep a pulse on how best to calibrate amounts and varieties of food for those impacted by the fires. We're also in continual touch with distribution partners to ensure they have fresh produce for their increased needs during the recovery.

We deeply appreciate the outpouring of notes from our supporters, and we remain committed to the multiple stages and sectors of the LA city and county community which are, and will be, impacted by this unprecedented disaster for months to come.

In solidarity,
The Food Forward Team

P.S. If you're interested in getting out in the field with us, volunteer events are available. Please see our [volunteer calendar](#).

Donate

January 14, 2025

Dear Food Forward Community:

We hope this message finds you and your loved ones safe during these devastating fires. Our hearts go out to everyone affected by this unimaginable crisis, though as Angelinos we know we ALL are affected by this emergency and will be for weeks, months, and years to come.

Now over a week in, this surreal situation keeps shifting. I wanted to take a minute to get the word out about how Food Forward is responding to this unprecedented crisis. In short, we are open and operating, distributing hundreds of thousands of pounds of produce daily, and making pivots in service where closures and canceled distributions affect our community.

- Our staff have been in communication with partner agencies to learn of their specific needs and, as a result, have scheduled increased distributions, including with larger multi-location partners in key areas through our partner the YMCA. We're in discussions with many others (including Red Cross and World Central Kitchen), as well as the city and county of Los Angeles, to help coordinate distributions as soon as they are needed.
- Due to farmers market cancellations and unhealthy air quality, many of our volunteer-powered events have been paused or modified in the affected areas, but we are closely monitoring and working to get gleaned events back up and running. Meanwhile, we are working to get food to agencies that would have ordinarily received produce from those events. We love our volunteers and know many want to get out in the community and do something, so keep an eye on our [Volunteer Calendar](#) for opportunities at our Farmers Market Recovery and Backyard Harvesting events.
- Hand fruit, such as oranges or tangerines, has been a top-of-list request by our partner organizations. If you have some in your yard that's ripe and that you're able to harvest, [you can connect with us](#) to make those donations. Reminder: PLEASE hold off on harvesting until after you have coordinated with us.
- While produce recovery and distribution continue to pivot, we anticipate incurring significant additional costs (overtime, staff redeployment, transportation, fuel, etc.) to meet this moment, should you care to [financially support](#) our work to ensure fresh produce continues to flow to all you can [donate here](#).

We expect there to be significant long-term effects as a result of these tragedies, including the economic repercussions for communities of low-income service workers, caretakers, etc. These are our neighbors who may not have lost their homes, but will have lost their means of income having worked in the homes, businesses, and restaurants which are now destroyed.

We are so grateful for the 250+ partners—large and small—that allow us to continue to do this urgent work, such as the one we heard from this Sunday:

“This was a tough week here in the Conejo Valley for many...90% of Thousand Oaks was without power for 30 hours. Some are still without. Food spoiled. Many lost wages as workplaces closed. Families picked up expensive take-out food so our Pantry was extra busy with 110 households served when we typically have about 60 at the smaller Shadows 2nd Friday event.

We picked up from your Oxnard [Community Action of Ventura] hub on Tuesday...[Your staff] dropped off fabulous tangerines and one of our volunteers picked up at the Thousand Oaks Farmers Market on Thursday just as the Kenneth fire broke out.

Food Forward is always there for us.

We are thrilled to partner with you and so grateful to be able to offer families healthy fresh fruits and vegetables. Being able to communicate directly...makes working with you a delight."

- Adelante Comunidad Conejo, hunger relief partner

At this writing, all Food Forward staff are thankfully safe. We're grateful for all of the generous and kind supporters who've reached out to ask how they can help those affected by this devastation. We will keep you posted as things develop on our end, as we do all we can to provide long-term assistance to rebuild our community.

- Rick Nahmias and The Food Forward Family

[Donate](#)