



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