



Americares Response Strategy for the Los Angeles Wildfires

Objective

The Los Angeles wildfires have left tens of thousands of families displaced and in urgent need of health care and essential services. Americares is focusing its efforts on supporting uninsured and vulnerable populations with a comprehensive response plan that leverages its expertise in cash assistance, clinic partnerships, and emergency response. This strategy will provide immediate relief while setting the stage for longer-term recovery and resilience.

Immediate Response

Overview

Americares rapid and effective response to the LA wildfires is made possible through our extensive resources, infrastructure, and partnerships. Our local partner network includes 24 organizations that operate dozens of clinics in the LA area, along with 13 community health providers and the California State Association of Free and Charitable Clinics. With these partners we continue to address the unique challenges posed by these emergencies and will ensure that the long-term health impacts are effectively mitigated. We continue to create new partnerships with LA organizations to help meet additional immediate needs.

Americares has a proven track record of managing disaster relief efforts effectively. By leveraging community connections, our Global Roster of trained emergency response professionals, and our distribution capacity of medicines and medical supplies, we can meet urgent health care needs and deliver critical supplies to the hardest-hit communities. Together with our partners, we have been working to increase access to quality care for communities across the Los Angeles area for several years.

Key Emergency Response Activities

Our staff is on the ground, assessing the situation, connecting with key partners and supporting the distribution of needed resource. The following list will continue to be refined based on ongoing assessments and evolving needs:

- 1. Essential Supplies Distribution**

Americares is mobilizing thousands of N95/KN95 masks to mitigate the health risks of poor air quality. Displaced individuals impacted by power-outages are receiving hygiene kits containing basic sanitation items and water. To-date, we have provided three truckloads of water to the LA Regional Food Bank. We will continue to provide shipments of medicines, supplies, and hygiene kits prioritized for displaced individuals and families.



[VIDEO](#): Dr. Julie Varughese at our Distribution Center in Connecticut, where shipments are underway to Los Angeles. January 2025. (Video/Americares).

2. **Cash Assistance Program**

Americares will distribute cash cards to allow families to address their unique needs with flexibility and purchase essentials such as food, temporary housing, and hygiene products.

3. **Clinic Support**

In collaboration with 24 partner organizations that run dozens of clinics in the LA area, Americares will ensure continuity of care for uninsured and migrant populations. This includes replenishing medications, maintaining operational capabilities, and providing logistical support to clinics serving as community health hubs during the crisis.

Americares Local Partner Clinics

- Bartz-Altadonna Community Health Center , Los Angeles , Federally Qualified Health Center
- Buddhist Tzu Chi Medical Center , Los Angeles , Free Clinic
- Coachella Valley Volunteers in Medicine , Riverside , Free Clinic
- Conejo Free Clinic , Ventura , Free Clinic
- Free Clinic of Simi Valley , Ventura , Free Clinic
- Harbor Community Clinic , Los Angeles , Federally Qualified Health Center
- Hollywood Sunset Free Clinic , Los Angeles , Free Clinic
- Lestonnac Free Clinic – operating across 13 sites , Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino , Free Clinic
- Medical Mission Adventures , Los Angeles , Free Clinic
- Nhan HOA Comprehensive Health Care Clinic , Los Angeles , Federally Qualified Health Center
- Orthopaedic Hemophilia Treatment Center , Los Angeles , Hemophilia Treatment Center (HTC)
- Samuel Dixon Family Health Centers-Canyon County , Los Angeles , Federally Qualified Health Center
- Samuel Dixon Family Health Centers-Newhall , Los Angeles , Federally Qualified Health Center
- Samuel Dixon Family Health Centers-Val Verde , Los Angeles , Federally Qualified Health Center
- Southern California Medical Center , Los Angeles , Federally Qualified Health Center
- Symba Center , San Bernardino , Free Clinic
- Tarzana Treatment Centers, Inc. , Los Angeles , Free Clinic
- Unicare Community Health Center, Inc. , San Bernardino , Federally Qualified Health Center
- Universal Community Health Center , Los Angeles , Federally Qualified Health Center
- Valley Community Healthcare , Los Angeles , Federally Qualified Health Center
- Vida Mobile Clinic , Los Angeles , Free Clinic
- Well-One Health , San Bernardino , Free Clinic
- Westminster Free Clinic , Ventura , Free Clinic

Preliminary Budget for Immediate Response

To implement these activities effectively, AmeriCares has developed the following budget*:

Immediate Response Phase		
Emergency supplies	Includes procurement, shipping and distribution of masks, hygiene kits, water, medicine, medical supplies and other supplies as needed	\$1,150,000
Cash assistance	Includes cash cards for survivors who are impacted by poverty	\$1,000,000
Recovery & Resilience Phase		
Restoration of safety net health services	Includes support for community clinics to rebuild, repair, restock, support additional operational and programmatic costs, etc.	\$1,000,000
Mental health and psychosocial support programs	Includes MHPSS for survivors, community clinic staff and other first responders	\$500,000
Disaster preparedness and climate resilience programs	Includes long-term engagements with clinics to drive preparedness and resilience for communities disproportionately impacted by climate events and poverty	\$500,000
	Oversight and administration (17%)	\$850,000
	Total Estimated Budget	\$5,000,000
<i>**All budget categories include staffing, communications and outreach costs.</i>		

Monitoring and Evaluation

Throughout this phase, AmeriCares will closely monitor all response activities, including the distribution of supplies and cash cards. Feedback from clinic partners and beneficiaries will be collected to assess the effectiveness of the response. Weekly progress updates will be shared with donors and stakeholders.

Communications and Media

A dedicated communications team will provide real-time updates, leveraging AmeriCares website, social media platforms, and partner networks to share progress, highlight key achievements, and maintain public engagement

Future Needs and Long-Term Plans

While this early phase addresses immediate needs, additional resources will be required for recovery and resilience. AmeriCares stays the course, committing to long-term recovery, which is at the heart of our mission. Plans include:



AmeriCares staff speak with Frank, a resident of Altadena, who discusses the impact the Eaton Fire has had on his neighborhood on Sunday, January 12, 2025 (Photo/Mike Demas).

- **Mid-Term Recovery:** Strengthening clinic operations and addressing mental health and psychosocial needs.
- **Long-Term Resilience:** Building climate preparedness through community education, infrastructure upgrades, and training programs.

Further plans and budgets will be developed as assessments continue and needs evolve.

Response Readiness and Disaster Preparedness

Americares is uniquely positioned to deliver health-focused disaster relief, combining immediate action with long-term impact. Key components of our preparedness and approach include:

- **Global Roster:** A dedicated team of emergency response professionals trained to deploy rapidly to disaster zones, ensuring efficient and expert-led relief efforts.
- **Distribution Centers:** Strategically located to facilitate rapid deployment of essential supplies, including medicines, medical equipment, and hygiene products.
- **Health-Centered Solutions:** Ensuring access to care for the most vulnerable populations through partnerships with local clinics.
- **Extensive Wildfire Experience:** Drawing on decades of experience responding to wildfires in California and beyond, Americares knows how to address the immediate and long-term health challenges these disasters create.
- **Climate Resilience:** Integrating climate adaptation strategies into response and recovery efforts to address the increasing frequency and severity of climate-related disasters.
- **Sustainability:** Reinforcing local health systems to prevent dependency and ensure enduring support.

Americares Emergency Response Approach

We meet urgent health needs of survivors in shelters and those cut off from care, often in remote areas. Getting medicine and supplies and immediate care to the most vulnerable survivors saves lives. Quick support helps local health centers keep their doors open and treat patients – not only providing medical care to existing patients but expand as needed to support patients from surrounding communities.

In a disaster, we use **several approaches** to provide access to health care where and when it is needed:

- **We focus on the most vulnerable,** including low-income patients, the elderly, and individuals with access and functional needs. In communities with health centers operating at limited capacity, we activate emergency medical teams, reaching hundreds of people. For those with urgent health conditions, like dialysis patients, we may transport them to functioning facilities for life-saving treatment.
- A damaged health center limits access to care. **We provide emergency repairs and supplies to restore operations or set up temporary space where health workers can treat patients.**



Americares Team Member Jake Wheeler assesses the damage from the Eaton Fire in Altadena, CA on Monday, January 13, 2025

When power is lost, we may supply generator fuel or even a new generator. In Puerto Rico after Maria, we supplied fuel and replaced vaccines that had been rendered ineffective with lost refrigeration. We are committed to keeping local health centers open, providing their staff with resources to serve their community.

- **Decades of logistics expertise mean effective movement of medicines and supplies for survivors**, often forced from their homes quickly without their medications. With damaged infrastructure, that capability is essential in reaching people who lose access to basic services. We even hand deliver medicine – whatever it takes. In extended disasters, people displaced for weeks and months need medication for chronic conditions. We help to maintain supply lines all the way to our neighbors in need.
- **We often mobilize a mobile medical clinic and/or team.** AmeriCares has been certified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an Emergency Medical Team Type 1 – Mobile provider. Mobile status denotes the organization’s ability to provide primary care services, stabilize patients with acute trauma injuries and refer patients for specialized care, with the flexibility to work across a wide range of locations. Watch the video for a guided tour of one of our mobile medical clinics.



Staff ready relief supplies and medicine for wildfire survivors at AmeriCares Global Distribution Center in Connecticut. January 2025. (Photo/Andrea Pane)

Our partnership-based model enables us to build local capacity while maintaining a light footprint.

It’s important for our work to reinforce the established health system rather than creating a parallel system where survivors become dependent on unsustainable services.

AmeriCares has responded to some of the worst wildfires in the U.S., including the deadly Hawaii wildfires in 2023, the massive 2020 wildfires that scorched swaths of the West Coast, the 2017 California wildfires, the 2018 Carr Fire and the 2020 Apple Fire.

For more information, visit [americares.org](https://www.americares.org).