

LISC LA Deploys \$1.5M in Wildfire Relief Grants to Small Businesses with Support from Wells Fargo

LISC LA, with funding from Wells Fargo, is helping fire-impacted small businesses reopen, rebuild, and strengthen local communities.

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“

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*Nicole Williams, Executive
Director of LISC LA*

Support Corporation Los Angeles (LISC LA), with funding from Wells Fargo, has deployed \$1.5 million in direct relief grants to 150 small businesses recovering from the January wildfires. The \$10,000 grants are helping affected businesses rebuild, stabilize, and continue serving their communities.

The Back to Business: LISC LA Wildfire Relief Grant Program prioritized businesses facing the most significant losses, from those directly within the burn zones to others

impacted by the wider effects of the fires, such as loss of clientele, extended closures, and supply chain disruptions.

In addition to direct financial relief, the grant program offers a menu of technical assistance options to help small businesses recover and grow. LISC LA has partnered with the LA Regional Small Business Development Center (SBDC) to provide free, one-on-one advising and workshops tailored to post-disaster recovery.

Impacted small businesses can also access specialized coaching from a curated list of experts: Safiya Jihan Adams, a Microsoft leader and lifestyle entrepreneur offering guidance on branding, marketing, and AI tools; Aquila Farrell, a digital strategist with over \$2 million in online sales credited to her campaigns; and Dr. Joy Cooper, a physician and wellness advocate helping entrepreneurs manage stress and build resilience in both business and life.

“We're proud to offer this critical relief and deeply grateful to Wells Fargo for their early commitment and continued partnership,” said Nicole Williams, Executive Director of LISC LA. “What makes this program unique is that it goes beyond funding. We designed it to meet businesses where they are, pairing capital with hands-on technical assistance so owners have

the support they need to stabilize and thrive for the long term.”

Grantees reflect the diversity of LA County’s small business ecosystem. From brick-and-mortar establishments and mobile vendors to home-based entrepreneurs, many were doubly displaced since losing their home also meant losing their business. Compounding the losses, businesses are also navigating rising costs of goods and community-wide fear and instability that keep both workers and customers at home.

“The LA Wildfires caused canceled gigs, lost income, and forced us to hire costly vendors last-minute. As a small, diverse business with limited resources, every setback hits hard, making recovery a challenge we can't face alone.” - Wade “Benji” Benjamin, owner of BENDOLL Productions, a creative production company.

“During the Palisades fire our facility, along with everything in it, was completely destroyed. Not only did we lose our facility, but we lost the entire community we built within our gymnastics center.” - Violet Dominguez, owner of New Vibe Gymnastics.

“Our restaurant was among the many small businesses severely affected by this catastrophe. We faced substantial losses due to the sudden drop in foot traffic and unfortunately will continue to be impacted for the near future.” - Lucy Ramirez Thompson & Bret Thompson, owners of Pez Coastal Kitchen.

Some grants were distributed through Inclusive Action for the City, which helped ensure that impacted outdoor workers were included in the recovery effort, including street vendors, landscapers, and other entrepreneurs.

Throughout October, LISC LA is running a Support Local Business campaign on Instagram to highlight and promote fire-impacted small businesses. The campaign encourages Angelenos to shop locally and show love to the small businesses that make our communities great. Follow along at [@lisc_losangeles](https://www.instagram.com/lisc_losangeles) to learn more.

[Grantee Photos and Stories \(Press Kit\)](#)

About LISC LA

LISC LA is one of 37 offices of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation, a national non-profit organization supporting community development in cities and rural areas throughout the country. With residents and partners, LISC forges resilient communities of opportunity across America – great places to live, work, visit, do business and raise families. To learn more, visit our [website](#).

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