



Frequently Asked Questions

This document is intended to be a resource for VC LTRG members – providing language and explanations about the Group and what is it doing. Please feel free to direct additional questions to the LTRG facilitator, Anne Whatley (venturacountyltrg@gmail.com) or co-chairs: Nick Nguyen (nnguyen@salvationarmy.org) and Kelly Brown (kbrown@icfs.org).

1. What is the Ventura County Thomas Fire Long Term Recovery Group (VC LTRG)?

The Ventura County Thomas Fire Long Term Recovery Group is a collaborative of nonprofits, faith-based, governmental, business and other community organizations working together to coordinate recovery efforts and simplify access to support for community members that have been impacted by the Thomas Fire who do not have adequate personal resources for essential unmet needs because of the disaster.

2. Who are the members of the VC LTRG and how were they chosen?

Any organization providing resources (The Three Ms – Money, Muscle, Materials) toward the recovery process may participate. Currently, more than 40 organizations have taken part. A full list of participating organizations can be found on our website: www.vcthomasfirelongtermrecovery.org.

3. Who does the VC LTRG serve?

The VC LTRG aims to serve community members impacted by the Thomas Fire. These individuals have either lost their home, incurred significant damage to their home and/or experienced financial or mental health issues directly or indirectly related to the Thomas Fire requiring access to one or more resources.

4. Does the VC LTRG have money for those impacted by the Thomas Fire?

The VC LTRG itself does not have funds. Participating organizations have dollars raised for recovery efforts. Each participating organization uses its own criteria to determine support. The VC LTRG aims to streamline the process of getting assistance for those impacted and provide a centralized hub for agencies working with disaster impacted individuals and families to share information. VC LTRG participating organization funds are intended to provide gaps after federal, insurance and other recovery sources provide assistance.

5. What prompted the development of the VC LTRG?

The VC LTRG was formed out of the catalytic efforts of FEMA, Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)-Ventura County, California Governor's Office of Emergency Services and local social service agencies and community groups, who based on experience with communities facing the impact of disasters, suggest the creation a coordinating body for long term recovery. The purpose is to establish and maintain a diverse network of nonprofits, faith-based, governmental, business and other community organizations to create a framework that helps build, strengthen and sustain a more resilient community impacted by the Thomas Fire.

6. Why is a collaborative needed instead of one agency handling?

It was determined that there was not the capacity or expertise within one agency to manage all assistance. A network of organizations has the ability to quickly scale up to address emerging needs and bring in additional resources and expertise more quickly than a single organization.

www.vcthomasfirelongtermrecovery.org

7. How long do LTRGs operate in other similar circumstances and communities?

It varies, disaster recovery experts report that long term recovery is generally several years. A number of factors will influence the work of the VC LTRG, including support for case management, timing of when funds for those impacted are exhausted as well as the rate cases for assistance are closed.

8. There is a lot of conflicting information about who and where to go for help. What is the best way to get help or find out if you are qualified to receive help?

2-1-1 is serving as the main point of entry for anyone wishing to talk to someone about eligibility and resources for those impacted by the Thomas Fire. Phone and two-way text support is available in English and Spanish. If an individual or family is still struggling with housing or financially due to losses caused by the Thomas Fire contact 2-1-1 -either call 2-1-1, email 211@icfs.org or text 898211 with your zip code and you will be connected with a Specialist.

9. How are the VC LTRG services funded?

Support for agencies providing case management has come from a number of sources including Ventura County Community Foundation, United Way of Ventura County, United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR805), Jewish Family Services Emergency Services, The Salvation Army as well as individual fundraising by individual organizations, groups and businesses.

10. How much money is there to help?

VC LTRG participating organizations currently have combined about \$1.5 million in long term recovery assistance. However, funds are being distributed to respond to unmet needs on an ongoing basis. The VC LTRG is committed to continue to explore and pursue possible additional funding and in-kind assistance based on identified unmet needs. Other independent organizations also have separate funds to provide support, including local and federal government programs. A comprehensive list of organizations providing assistance to those impacted by the Thomas Fire is maintained by Ventura County 211 at <http://www.211ventura.org/disaster-info>.