

## Advice from Katie Arrington 1/14/25

I'm sorry to be connecting to you during this devastating time. Recovery after a disaster is a long process and I've been helping people navigate it for more than a decade.

If you don't know me, my name is Katie Arrington (formally Kate Dalton – Christian's daughter) I have my masters in public health with a specialization in emergency preparedness from UCLA, and I grew up in Venice. I am currently the Recovery and Resiliency Program Manager for Boulder County, focusing on community engagement after disasters, running post disaster case management programs, helping connect people to trauma informed resources, and helping individuals and families navigate the arduous process that is disaster recovery.

I'm going to not overload this first communication with too much information, but just start with the basics, which is applicable if your house is damaged or destroyed. If your house was damaged or smoke impacted you don't want to move back in, until you've connected with an industrial hygienist (I'll find some for California - local governments may hire them as a resource for residents).

1. Call your insurance company and find out what your ALE (additional living expenses) coverage is and how long it goes for. Essentially this is the coverage that puts you in short and long-term housing during your recovery.
2. Secure your long-term housing. The housing market will be stretched with this many losses, so getting in somewhere as soon as possible is important. Having a place to go, will help with your overall mental health stability, especially if you have kids.
3. There will likely be a disaster assistance center or DAC set up once the fires are more under control, FEMA will be there. Please go and register with FEMA, registering with FEMA whether or not you need FEMA funds is critical - other funding sources including low interest loans for rebuilding will likely require proof of a FEMA registration.
4. United Policy holders (a non-profit) in California is a wealth of information and a long term trusted partner with many local governments. <https://uphelp.org>. Here's an additional link for registering for their information newsletter: <https://uphelp.org/disaster-recovery-help/2025cawildfires/>. You'll get invited to a webinar happening at the end of the month which will be really useful.
5. Do not go home and look for precious items at your property. There are national non profits who specialize in sifting through debris, in a safe manner and as soon as I hear which ones are coming to LA, I'll send the information.

6. You will get more information than you ever knew what to do with. You will forget it. You will ask the same questions a dozen times. Try not to be hard on yourself if this happens. Whether you are adequately resourced or under resourced this is major trauma and my experience is that information has to be communicated many times in different methods in order for it to sink in.

This is the immediate stuff. If you have specific additional questions let me know, otherwise I'll continue to send additional information, especially as I hear more about what is going on locally.

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