

INSPIRE

Rising from the Ashes: UNCF's Lifeline Amidst the LA Wildfires



LOIE WHITE, A JUNIOR MAJORING IN COMPUTER SCIENCE AT UNCF-MEMBER INSTITUTION SPELMAN COLLEGE.

In the summer of 2025, the city of Los Angeles found itself engulfed in flames as wildfires raged through communities, leaving destruction in their wake. The devastation was felt not only in the loss of homes and businesses but also in the disruption of education for students. In the face of this crisis, UNCF stepped in to provide emergency funding and support.

The wildfires, fueled by extreme heat and dry conditions, swept through neighborhoods, forcing thousands to evacuate. Schools were closed, and many students lost their homes, creating a ripple effect that jeopardized their educational pursuits. Reports indicated that over 15,000 students in the affected areas were at risk of losing their academic year due to displacement and trauma.

Recognizing the urgent need for support, UNCF launched the **UNCF Los Angeles Area Wildfire Relief Fund** through three specific programs, offering emergency scholarships that were critical financial assistance to eligible students and alumni.

The relief fund was available to undergraduate and graduate students attending HBCUs; the children of HBCU alumni who suffered losses due to the wildfires; and students attending any accredited, four-year college or university whose families have been directly impacted by the wildfires.

“UNCF’s Los Angeles Area Wildfire Relief Fund was more than just financial assistance; it was a lifeline for students and families striving to reclaim their dreams after the devastation of the LA wildfires,” said Dr. Veda Ramsay Stamps, regional development director, Los Angeles, UNCF. “In the face of adversity, the spirit of community shines brightest. Our fund helped us to restore hope and opportunity for those students and families affected by the wildfires.”

Among the beneficiaries of the emergency relief fund was Jerimee Demetrius Moore, a junior majoring in child psychology at UNCF-member Stillman College. The fires destroyed his family’s home forcing Jerimee and his family to evacuate to his grandmother’s home.

“We were devastated. But me being a prayer warrior, I returned to school hoping for the best,” Jerimee recalled. “Home wasn’t an option because I didn’t have a home anymore. So God opened the door for Stillman College. God put me in touch with UNCF. When I arrived at Stillman, I didn’t have to pay anything. Scholarships covered everything. I’m grateful for all [UNCF has] done because without you, my future would have been in jeopardy. Thanks to UNCF, it isn’t.”

Similar stories emerged as emergency funding reached students across the region.

Loie White, a junior majoring in computer science at UNCF-member Spelman College, recalled when the fires struck, her family was forced to relocate from their home because of the toxicity in the soil caused by the fires. With the support of UNCF, Loie received funds enabling her to focus on her studies.



Logan Weaver, a sophomore majoring in financial planning at Arizona State l



Jerimee Demetrius Moore, a junior majoring in child psychology at UNCF-member *ir* College.



“I was happy to receive financial support from UNCF. It’s nice to know that someone is looking out for you,” she said.

Ethan Allen, Jr., a sophomore at the University of California Berkeley, planning to major in forestry, expressed gratitude to UNCF for the support, which allowed him to focus on his studies and appreciate his school more. Ethan and his family evacuated their home which was destroyed. UNCF provided Ethan with financial assistance, which alleviated some of the family’s stress. He was alerted by a cousin that UNCF was willing to help. “I was excited to say the least,” he said after learning he would be receiving help from UNCF. “It’s really helped to elevate my parents’ stress. I am eternally grateful to UNCF.”

Logan Weaver, a sophomore majoring in financial planning at Arizona State University (ASU), learned about UNCF’s emergency funding assistance program from his mother. Despite losing everything, he resumed his freshman year at ASU and continued pursuing his interest in artificial intelligence and

business. Logan expressed his gratitude for the assistance he received from UNCF. “What you guys are doing is incredible. The help UNCF provided is awesome.”

The 2025 LA wildfires served as a stark reminder of the unpredictability of nature and the resilience of the human spirit. Through its emergency funding and comprehensive support, UNCF played a pivotal role in helping students navigate one of the most challenging times in their lives. As they move forward, the stories of resilience and hope continue to inspire a renewed commitment to education and empowerment for all, ensuring that the lessons learned from this crisis will foster a better future for generations to come.