

Page: Submitter's Information
Chapter Name ACC Southern California
Page: Achievement Award
Category Innovative Programming Effort
Chapter Name ACC Southern California
Chapter Size Large (more than 851 members)
Entry Title Los Angeles Wildfire Recovery Toolkit: Legal and Insurance Know-How
Entry Description <p>In response to the devastating Southern California Fires earlier this year, the ACC Southern California Chapter swiftly launched a meaningful and impactful initiative to support those affected by the Los Angeles wildfires that impacted so many family members, friends, and colleagues. Recognizing the urgent need for timely, relevant, and accessible support, the Chapter created a comprehensive online resource hub and organized a four-part webinar series and opened it up to the public at large.</p> <p>Planning & Execution</p> <p>Within just a week of the onset of the fires, Chapter leaders mobilized to research credible disaster relief and legal support websites, curated relevant tools and information, and conducted outreach to sponsors and partners to help develop and present content-rich webinars focused on supporting and providing helpful content to these fire victims. These sessions focused on topics such as legal rights during natural disasters, mental health and resilience, navigating property and business insurance claims, business continuity planning, and predicting what the future insurance market will look like.</p> <p>This rapid-response effort was implemented in just a week. The resource page, which included more than 50 different resources, went live, and the first webinar launched shortly thereafter. The entire four-part webinar series was rolled out over the following weeks, creating an ongoing support system as members continued to recover. We advertised through our email listserv as well as LinkedIn and allowed anyone who wanted to participate to enroll.</p> <p>Remarkably, the entire initiative was executed on a \$0 budget, leveraging volunteer leadership, existing chapter relationships, and sponsor goodwill. This underscores the Chapter's resourcefulness, dedication to its members, and strong community partnerships.</p> <p>This initiative exemplifies the ACC Southern California Chapter's mission-driven approach to leadership, resilience, and member service during times of crisis.</p>
When was the program initiated? 1/11/2025

What was the project objective? Describe the steps you took to achieve this objective, including key strategies, activities, or milestones.

The objective of the ACC Southern California Chapter's Wildfire Response Initiative was to deliver immediate, meaningful support to members affected by the Southern California Fires by providing access to trusted resources and expert guidance—free of charge—during a time of crisis.

Chapter leaders wanted to help our members and the community in general affected by the wildfires. We came up with a solution to provide helpful information utilizing our sponsors through webinars and to gather resources and post them on our website.

A small task force was assembled to research and compile reputable sources of information, including emergency legal assistance, insurance guidance, housing support, and mental health services. The team also began outlining potential webinar topics aligned with these urgent needs and reached out to partner sponsors for assistance.

We reached out to existing sponsors and subject matter experts, many of whom generously agreed to present webinars on short notice. Their willingness to contribute at no cost made the initiative financially feasible.

We created a centralized, easy-to-navigate resource webpage on the Chapter's website. It included links to disaster relief tools, hotlines, legal support information, and updates on the upcoming webinars.

Within about a week of the fires' outbreak, the first of four live webinars was launched. Each session was promoted via direct email and social media to maximize awareness and attendance. All programs and resources were made available to members at no cost. We recorded the webinars and posted them on our Wildfire resource page so those who could not attend the live event could still access the content afterward.

The series not only provided immediate help but also strengthened our Chapter's community and resilience moving forward. This initiative demonstrated the Chapter's ability to act quickly, mobilize resources, and provide meaningful support in a time of urgent need.

How was the objective achieved? How did you measure success, and to what extent do you believe the objective was met?

The objective of providing timely, accessible, and meaningful support to members impacted by the Southern California Fires was successfully met through strong engagement, positive feedback, and measurable reach across multiple platforms.

Webinar Participation: Each of the four webinars attracted between 35 to 146 attendees, demonstrating strong interest and engagement from members across the region. The high turnout, especially given the short planning timeline, reflected the relevance and urgency of the content.

Website Engagement: The resource webpage received a significant number of site views in its first week and continued to serve as a centralized hub for members seeking guidance and support over many months.

Social Media Impact: The initiative was promoted across our social media channels, where we tracked strong engagement through likes, shares, and comments, indicating that the content resonated with members and helped spread awareness of the available support.

Member Feedback: We received numerous messages of gratitude from members who found the webinars and resource page valuable during a difficult time. Several members also reshared the content with their own networks, further amplifying the effort's reach.

This initiative not only achieved its immediate objective of crisis support but also reinforced the ACC Southern California Chapter's role as a responsive, caring, and connected community for in-house counsel.

Please describe the total budget allocated for your program or initiative. Include a brief breakdown of how the funds were distributed across key areas. In addition, explain how the budget was used effectively or creatively to maximize impact.

The entire initiative was executed on a \$0 budget, leveraging volunteer leadership, existing chapter relationships, and sponsor goodwill. This underscores the Chapter's resourcefulness, dedication to its members, and strong community partnerships.

What significant obstacles or challenges did you encounter during the planning or implementation of your program or initiative? How did you address or overcome them? If you did not face major challenges, please explain why that may have been the case and what factors contributed to the smooth execution of your work.

The ACC Southern California Chapter faced several significant challenges in launching the Wildfire Response Initiative, each requiring thoughtful navigation, compassion, and rapid coordination:

Urgency of Response:

The most pressing challenge was the extremely short timeframe—resources were constantly changing and being updated. Staying on top of what was current and accurate proved difficult. We took recommendations and resources that were proved effective by other members to share first and foremost.

Sensitivity to Members in Crisis:

Reaching out to members who were actively dealing with trauma, displacement, or loss required extra sensitivity and care.

We approached communications with empathy, using a tone of compassion and solidarity. We focused on offering help—not promotion—and emphasized that the resources were there for support, without obligation or need for membership. The resources were for anyone who needed them.

Providing a Meaningful Show of Support:

We knew it wasn't enough to simply post links or hold webinars—we needed members to feel seen, supported, and part of a community. So we curated content specifically tailored to their needs during a crisis and ensured that the webinars provided not just legal guidance, but also mental health resources and opportunities for connection.

Some members had lost their homes or offices, and communication was difficult. We coordinated with colleagues and networks to identify and reach impacted members. We also encouraged peer-to-peer sharing to spread the word and foster a sense of collective care and support.

What do you anticipate will be the long-term impact of your project or initiative? Describe how the outcomes will extend beyond the immediate results, including any lasting benefits to the local/global ACC community. If applicable, explain how the initiative might be sustained, scaled, or replicated in the future.

The ACC Southern California Chapter's Wildfire Response Initiative was more than a crisis-time solution—it laid the foundation for a lasting culture of resilience, community care, and responsive leadership within our Chapter and the broader ACC network.

Strengthened Member Trust and Connection:

By responding swiftly and compassionately, we strengthened member loyalty and deepened the sense of community. Members saw firsthand that ACC is more than a professional association—it's a support system in times of need.

A Scalable Crisis Response Model:

The success of this initiative provides a blueprint for future emergency response efforts—whether regional or national. With minimal resources and quick mobilization, other Chapters can replicate this model to support their members in the face of wildfires, hurricanes, earthquakes, or other crises.

Partnerships and Sponsor Engagement:

We built stronger relationships with sponsors and presenters who now see the value of contributing to member wellbeing.

Empowered Volunteer Leadership:

The success of the initiative showcased how volunteer leaders can drive real impact, even with no budget.

Future Sustainability and Replication:

The initiative is easily replicable by other ACC Chapters or legal associations by leveraging local partnerships, volunteer leadership, and no-cost platforms.

Ongoing updates to the resource page and occasional check-ins with the community ensure this effort evolves into a sustained support system—not just a one-time response.

Ultimately, this initiative redefined what it means to serve our members—showing that even during moments of crisis, we can create connection, deliver value, and lead with purpose.

Please share what you are most proud to report about execution of this program. Please explain what this accomplishment means to you and how it reflects the values or goals of your work.

We are most proud of how quickly our Chapter came together to turn care into action, launching a fully developed resource webpage and delivering four high-impact webinars within just a few short weeks of the Southern California fires breaking. With zero budget, limited time, and members in crisis, we responded not with hesitation, but with empathy, urgency, and purpose.

This accomplishment is a powerful reflection of what we value most: community, service, and leadership with heart. It demonstrated that when our members needed support beyond CLEs or networking—when they needed help as people—we showed up. We acted not out of obligation, but out of a deep commitment to one another.

It also reaffirmed that meaningful impact doesn't always require big budgets or long planning cycles. Sometimes, the greatest value comes from quick, human-centered responses, powered by volunteers, compassion, and collaboration. This initiative reminds us that the strength of ACC Southern California lies in our people—and that when we lead with empathy, we make a lasting difference.

To us, this effort wasn't just about information—it was about connection, resilience, and care in action. And that's something we'll carry with pride far beyond this moment.

Please share how your project or initiative is innovative. Describe any original approaches, strategies, or tools you used to address a problem or achieve your goals. What makes your work stand out from more traditional methods.

Our Chapter's Wildfire Response Initiative was not just about what we did, but about how we did it—transforming a traditionally slow, resource-dependent support model into a rapid-response, zero-budget, empathy-driven solution that put people first.

Rapid Resource Creation:

Instead of waiting to coordinate with larger institutions or gather funding, we created and launched a live online resource page within days, offering curated legal, mental health, and emergency support tailored to in-house counsel. The speed and customization made it far more useful than generic disaster pages.

Crisis-Specific Programming:

Rather than relying on pre-existing content, we built and delivered a four-part webinar series specifically addressing challenges faced during wildfires—from legal rights and insurance to trauma and business recovery. The programming was practical, relevant, and timed to meet members where they were.

People-First Outreach:

We reimagined communication with members—prioritizing warmth, compassion, and solidarity over traditional, transactional messaging. Our tone and timing were carefully considered to support, not overwhelm, those facing personal loss.

Volunteer- and Sponsor-Powered Execution:

By tapping into our volunteer base and strong sponsor relationships, we bypassed the need for funding and created a collaborative support network that delivered high-quality content at zero cost. This lean, community-powered model is a clear departure from more resource-heavy responses.

Digital Agility with a Human Touch:

We used technology not just for efficiency but to foster connection—through real-time webinars, interactive discussions, and an easily shareable webpage. We paired digital tools with emotional intelligence, ensuring that virtual support felt personal and sincere.

This innovative model shows what's possible when urgency, compassion, and creativity intersect—and sets a new standard for how Chapters can care for their communities in moments that matter most.

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Please share the link to any video files related to your submission.