

# DATA FOR ACTION

BRIEF  
**3**

## IMPACTS OF THE JANUARY 2025 WILDFIRES ON BUSINESSES: SIX-MONTH ASSESSMENT IN ALTADENA AND PACIFIC PALISADES

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Politics Institute

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# About This Data Brief



This brief is the final in a three-part series that examines the impact of the January 2025 wildfires on small businesses in Altadena and Pacific Palisades. Using multiple data sources, the first brief establishes a baseline of the local business landscape before the fires and shows that microbusinesses comprised the vast majority of businesses. The second brief examines the extent of direct physical damage to businesses caused by the January 2025 wildfires, highlighting that microbusinesses were disproportionately represented among damaged or destroyed structures. This final brief in the series examines the short-term disruptions experienced by micro- and non-businesses by assessing business delistings and property sales in the months following the fires. The findings across all briefs underscore that microbusinesses are a critical part of the local economy and are likely experiencing ongoing vulnerability in the aftermath of the fires. However, these findings should be viewed as preliminary, given the reporting lags and the limited timeframe of available data.







# Introduction

California is home to one of the largest and most diverse small business sectors in the nation,<sup>1</sup> with more than 4.3 million small businesses providing over 7.6 million jobs and accounting for nearly half of the state's private workforce.<sup>2</sup> Los Angeles County alone is home to more than 1.3 million small businesses, accounting for roughly one-third of the state's total, and it hosts more women- and minority-owned businesses than any other county in the nation.<sup>3</sup>

Despite their central role in LA's economy, small businesses often lack the financial safety nets and institutional support needed to withstand major disruptions. The COVID-19 pandemic exposed these weaknesses: many struggled to keep their doors open<sup>4</sup> and faced uneven access to recovery resources.<sup>5</sup> The January 2025 Eaton and Palisades wildfires once again underscored these challenges. The fires destroyed thousands of structures, displaced residents and workers, and tragically claimed lives. Businesses were not spared, as many were directly damaged while others were affected by evacuation orders and a sharp loss in customers.

This brief is the third in a three-part series examining the impact of the January 2025 wildfires on small businesses in Altadena and Pacific Palisades, the two areas hardest hit by the wave of wildfires that swept through Southern California.

This brief assesses the short-term disruptions experienced by micro- and non-businesses, focusing on two indicators: business delistings and parcel sales. Together, these indicators provide an early snapshot of business stability following the fires.

The data show that relatively few businesses were delisted or tied to property sales in the six months following the fires; however, most of those affected were microbusinesses. Although data lags and reporting differences indicate that the findings should be considered as preliminary, this brief and others in the series underscore the significance of microbusinesses to the local economy and their ongoing post-fire vulnerability. The findings have important implications for public and private sector funding programs, which create opportunities for small businesses to recover and grow.

# Data and Methods

To provide an early snapshot of business stability following the fires, we focus on two indicators of disruption in the six months following the January 2025 wildfires:

- **Business delistings:** This indicator measures the number of businesses that no longer appeared in commercial listings (“delisted”) six months after the fires. Delisting captures only part of the disruption—some establishments may still exist but have not yet reopened, while others may have relocated outside the affected area. Despite this limitation, the measure offers valuable insights into how the local business landscape has shifted. We compared business listings from December 2024 (pre-fire baseline) to August 2025 (six months post-fire) across three sources: Data Axle, AtoZ, and Dun & Bradstreet (D&B). These directories differ both in coverage and update frequency, and together they provide a more comprehensive view of how the January wildfires may have impacted businesses in Altadena (ZIP 91001) and Pacific Palisades (ZIP 90272).
- **Parcel sales:** The impacts of the wildfires can also be felt indirectly when landlords choose to sell their property rather than rebuild. For businesses that rent space, such sales can make it difficult—or even impossible—to reopen, creating additional barriers to recovery. To track these dynamics, we analyzed parcel data from the Los Angeles County Assessor, which records property transactions through August 7, 2025. Our analysis focused on parcels with recording dates after January 31, 2025, to capture sales in the six months following the fires in Altadena (ZIP 91001) and Pacific Palisades (ZIP 90272). While parcel transfers do not always indicate business displacement, they provide a valuable signal of potential instability for tenants during a critical period of recovery.

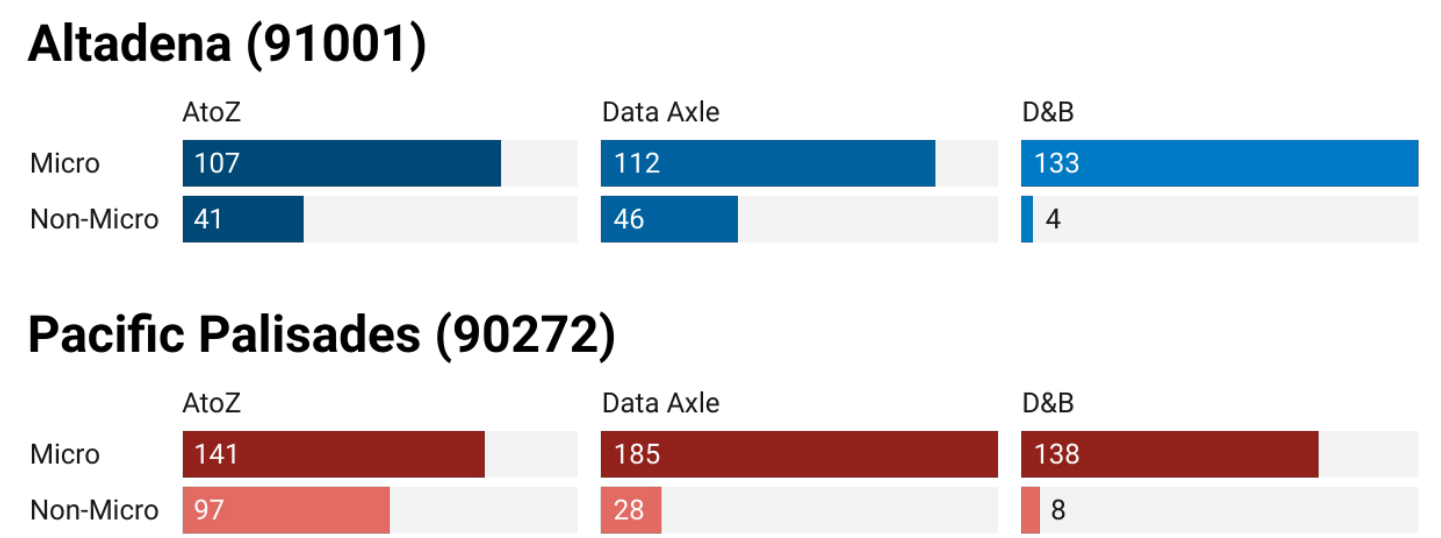


# Key Finding 1: Few Businesses Were Delisted After the Fires, but Most Were Microbusinesses

As shown in Figure 1, the number of private businesses delisted in the first six months following the fires ranged from 137 to 158 in Altadena and from 146 to 238 in Pacific Palisades. These differences reflect variation across datasets and potential reporting lags. Overall, delistings accounted for a relatively small share of local businesses in both communities—about 3% in D&B, 11-17% in AtoZ, and 14-16% in Data Axle. It remains uncertain whether those still listed are currently operational, as revenue and employment data have not yet been updated. Some may eventually reopen, while others could close permanently.

The majority of delisted establishments were microbusinesses (1-9 employees). Their numbers ranged from 107 to 133 in Altadena and from 138 to 185 in Pacific Palisades, depending on the data source. As before, these differences reflect systematic variations in how each dataset collects and updates business information.

Figure 1. Private Business Delistings Six Months After the Fires in Altadena and Pacific Palisades



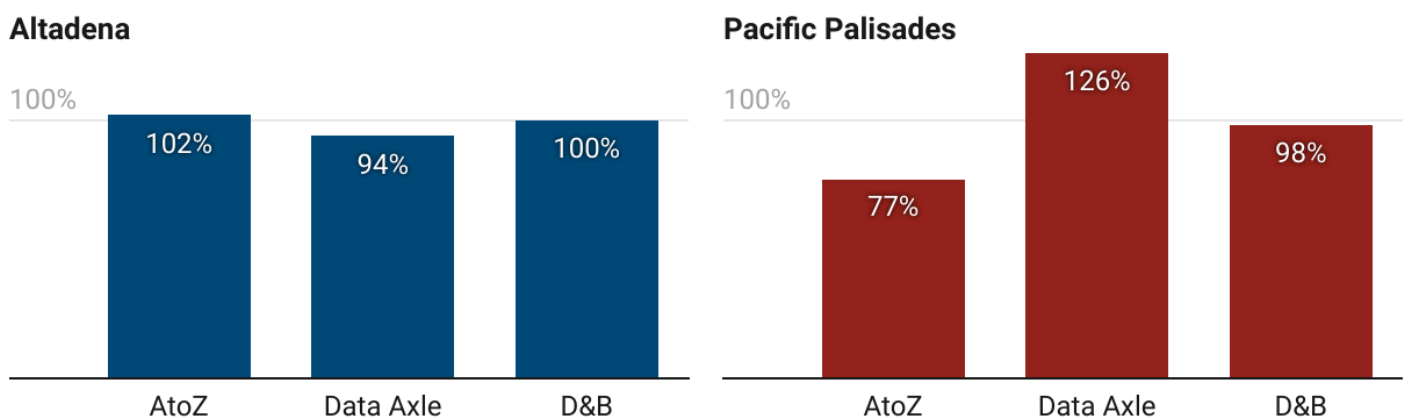
**Source:** Author’s analysis of Data Axle, Dun & Bradstreet, and AtoZ Databases (based on business listings from December 2024 and August 2025).

To assess whether microbusinesses were more or less affected than larger firms, we conducted a parity analysis. For each dataset, we compared the share of delisted businesses that were micro to their share of all businesses prior to the fires. A value of 100% means microbusinesses were affected in proportion to their baseline presence; values above 100% indicate they were disproportionately more likely to be delisted, while values below 100% mean they were less affected.

As shown in Figure 2, parity values varied somewhat across datasets and between Altadena and Pacific Palisades. Still, the overall conclusion is consistent: microbusinesses were delisted at roughly the same rate as their share of the overall business base. This pattern suggests that microbusinesses did not face a higher immediate exit risk than large businesses, although their recovery challenges may still be greater.

## Key Finding 2: Microbusinesses Were Delisted at Rates Similar to Their Share of the Local Business Base

**Figure 2. Parity Ratios of Delisted Microbusinesses Six Months After the Fires**



**Source:** Author's analysis of Data Axle, Dun & Bradstreet, and AtoZdatabases (based on business listings from December 2024 and August 2025).

**Note:** Parity compares a microbusiness's share of those affected (delisted) to its baseline share. 100% = proportional impact; >100% = disproportionately more affected; <100% = less affected.

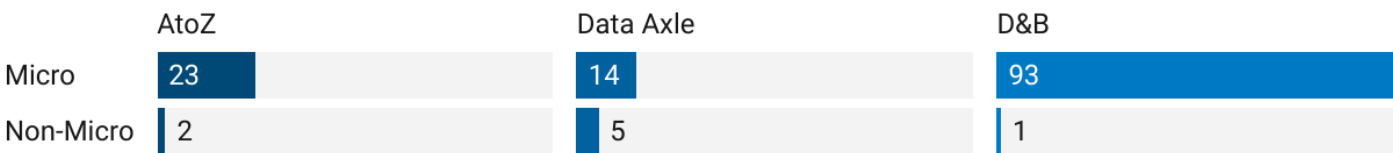
# Key Finding 3: Few Businesses Were Located on Parcels That Sold After the Fires, With Most Sales Involving Parcels Hosting Microbusinesses

In Altadena (ZIP 91001), the number of private businesses located on parcels sold after January 31, 2025, ranged from fewer than 20 to just over 90, depending on the dataset. As shown in Figure 3, the majority of businesses on sold parcels were microbusinesses, with only a handful of larger establishments identified. Most of these sales were tied to residential parcels rather than commercial properties. Although estimates vary across AtoZ, Data Axle, and Dun & Bradstreet, the overall pattern is clear: relatively few businesses in Altadena were directly affected by parcel sales, and those that were tended to be small in scale.

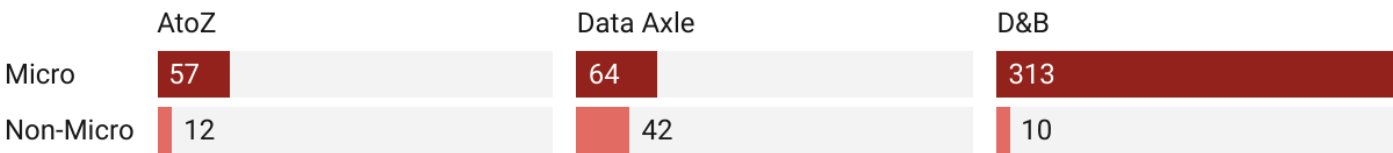
In Pacific Palisades (ZIP 90272), the numbers were higher, though they still represent only a small share of the total business base. Depending on the dataset, between 60 (AtoZ) and more than 300 (D&B) microbusinesses were located on sold parcels, compared to 10 (Data Axle) to just over 40 (D&B) non-micro businesses. As in Altadena, microbusinesses comprised the majority of those tied to parcels sold after the fires.

Figure 3. Private Businesses on Parcels Sold After the Fires in Altadena and Pacific Palisades

## Altadena (91001)



## Pacific Palisades (90272)



**Source:** Author’s analysis of Data Axle, Dun & Bradstreet, and AtoZdatabases (based on business listings from December 2024) and Los Angeles County Assessor parcel data (November 2024 and August 2025).

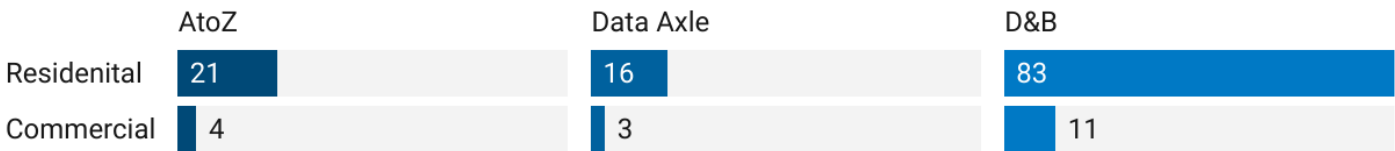


Figure 4 shows that in Altadena, most affected businesses were tied to residential parcels, underscoring the role of home-based enterprises in the local economy. Only a small fraction were located on commercial properties. In contrast, Pacific Palisades shows the opposite pattern, with the majority of affected businesses situated are on commercial parcels and a smaller share on residential sites. This difference reflects the structure of the local economies, particularly the relative prevalence of home-based establishments.

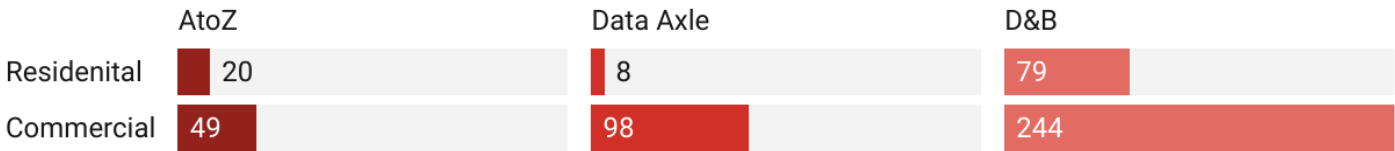
## Key Finding 4: Property Sales Were Tied Mostly to Residential Parcels in Altadena, While in Pacific Palisades They Were Concentrated on Commercial Parcels

Figure 4. Number of Private Businesses on Residential vs. Commercial Parcels Sold Post-Wildfires

### Altadena (91001)



### Pacific Palisades (90272)



Source: Author’s analysis of Data Axle, Dun & Bradstreet, and AtoZdatabases (based on business listings from December 2024) and Los Angeles County Assessor parcel data (November 2024 and August 2025).

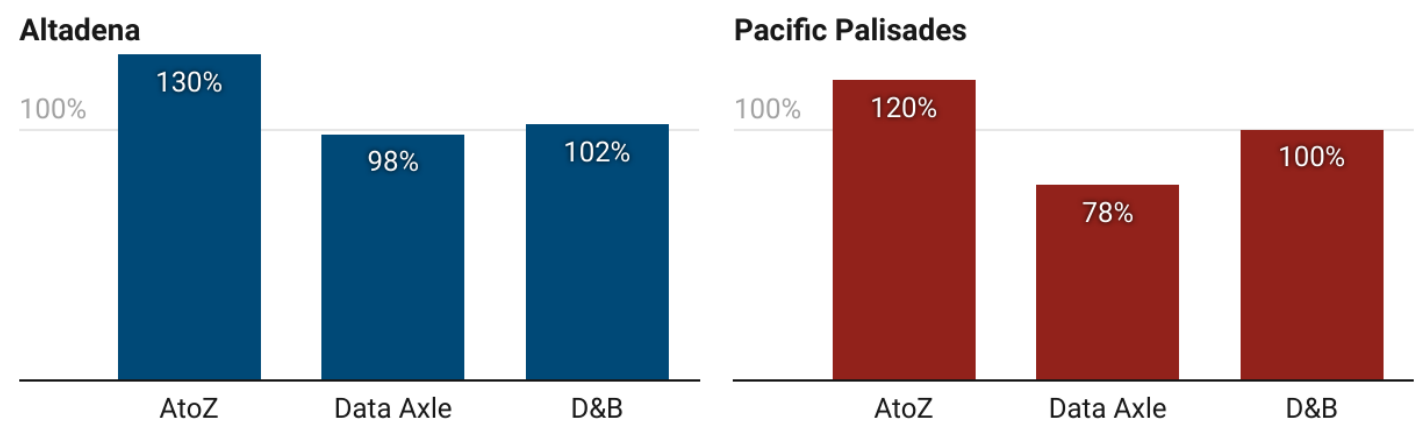
# Key Finding 5: Microbusinesses Were Disproportionately Located on Parcels Sold After the Fires

To assess whether micro-businesses were disproportionately represented among those located on sold parcels, we calculated parity ratios. These ratios compare the share of micro-businesses on sold parcels with their baseline share. As in the earlier parity analysis, a value of 100% indicates proportional impact, values above 100% suggest over-representation, and values below 100% indicate under-representation.

As shown in Figure 5, results vary across datasets and between the two study areas. In Altadena, micro-businesses were over-represented in AtoZ (130%) and slightly above parity in DnB (102%), but roughly proportional in Axle (98%). In Pacific Palisades, parity values suggest a mixed picture: over-representation in AtoZ (120%), proportional impact in DnB (100%), and under-representation in Axle (78%).

Overall, while patterns differ by source, the results suggest that micro-businesses were at least as likely—and in some cases more likely—to be located on parcels that changed ownership after the wildfires.

Figure 5. Parity Ratios of Microbusinesses on Sold Parcels in Altadena and Pacific Palisades



**Source:** Author’s analysis of Data Axle, Dun & Bradstreet, and AtoZdatabases (based on business listings from December 2024) and Los Angeles County Assessor parcel data (November 2024 and August 2025).  
**Note:** Parity compares a microbusiness’s share of those affected (on sold parcels) to its baseline share. 100% = proportional impact; >100% = disproportionately more affected; <100% = less affected.

# Conclusion



The January 2025 wildfires reshaped local business conditions in both Altadena and Pacific Palisades, though in different ways. In Altadena, relatively few businesses were tied to parcels that sold, and many of those were located on residential properties. In Pacific Palisades, a greater number of businesses were affected, more frequently linked to commercial parcels. Direct exits through delisting were evident in both areas, with microbusinesses comprising the majority—a reflection of their dominance within the local business base. However, their likelihood of delisting was broadly similar to those of non-micro businesses.

The analysis is constrained by reporting lags and the limited six-month window of data. Some businesses that remain listed may not have actually reopened, while others could still close or relocate in the months ahead. Parcel sales also introduce uncertainty, as ownership changes may affect whether remaining businesses can continue operating. Nonetheless, taken together, the findings highlight that recovery is still unfolding. Continued monitoring will be essential to capture long-term outcomes, especially for micro-businesses. These small businesses are often harder to identify because many operate from homes or outside traditional commercial spaces, and prior research shows that they face significant financial challenges and barriers to accessing aid. Ensuring that recovery programs include microbusinesses will be critical to sustaining the backbone of the local economy.

# Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Small Business Administration, 2024. Office of Advocacy, "New Advocacy Report Shows Small Business Total Reaches 34.8 Million, Accounting for 2.6 Million Net New Jobs in Latest Year of Data," press release, November 19, 2024. <https://advocacy.sba.gov/2024/11/19/new-advocacy-report-shows-small-business-total-reaches-34-8-million-accounting-for-2-6-million-net-new-jobs-in-latest-year-of-data/>

<sup>2</sup>U.S. Small Business Administration, 2025. 2025 Small Business Profile: California (June), [https://advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/California\\_2025-State-Profile.pdf](https://advocacy.sba.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/California_2025-State-Profile.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>Los Angeles County, LA County by the Numbers, current as of October 2024, <https://lacounty.gov/by-the-numbers>

<sup>4</sup>S. R. González, P. M. Ong, and Y. Marín, *Post-Pandemic Small Business Recovery amid Headwinds* (September 11, 2025), UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Institute, <https://latino.ucla.edu/research/postpandemic-small-business-recovery-amid-headwinds/>.

<sup>5</sup>M. Belitski, C. Guenther, A. S. Kritikos, et al., "Economic Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Entrepreneurship and Small Businesses," *Small Business Economics* 58 (2022): 593–609, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11187-021-00544-y>.



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