



SBA and USRC Announce Collaboration to Create Resilient Small Businesses

[Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman](#), head of the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) (SBA) joined [Evan Reis](#), Executive Director, [US Resiliency Council \(USRC\)](#) at the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce on Thursday, Dec. 1 to announce the creation of the SBA-USRC partnership to promote resiliency to small businesses in California.

“Focusing on how small businesses can be resilient during disasters, and recover and rebuild their local economy is the most critical work we can do,” said SBA Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman.

“We know businesses who mitigate risks recover from disasters faster,” said Julie Clowes, Director, SBA Los Angeles. “We were honored to have SBA Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman help us announce our new partnership with USRC and amplify the importance of building a resilient small business community. This collaboration is an important step in reaching our mutual goals of ensuring small businesses survive and rapidly recover from disasters.”

This partnership will provide small businesses targeted education and programming on issues related to mitigation and resiliency from natural disasters. Topics will include: reducing earthquake risk, disaster mitigation resources (federal and state), insurance and how to finance mitigation projects.

“This partnership with SBA recognizes years of efforts by USRC and its members to educate businesses on the importance of resilience to mitigate threats from natural hazards such as earthquakes,” said Reis.



PROMOTING SMALL BUSINESS RESILIENCE – U.S. Small Business Administration head Isabella Casillas Guzman (center) meets with State, local and non-profit leaders to urge small business owners to become more resilient in the face of disasters. Pictured (l to r) are: Maria S. Salinas, President & CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce; Evan Reis, Executive Director of the U.S. Resiliency Council; Assemblymember Freddie Rodriguez, Emergency Management Committee Chair; and Assemblymember Chris Holden, Appropriations Committee Chair.

The partnership with the SBA represents another major milestone in the resilience movement involving the USRC during the past year.

“The USRC and a coalition of supporters are grateful to California Governor Gavin Newsom and the State Legislature for their leadership in recently approving \$250-million in grant funding in FY 2023-24 to assist small business apartment owners with the earthquake retrofit of their buildings,” said Reis.

In the months since approval of the matching grant program, Reis has spoken about the landmark action at events across the country. The program will protect affordable multifamily housing and the many seniors, working families, and students living in them. Reis believes the retrofit program for multifamily housing can be a model for the nation because of its unprecedented collaboration between diverse stakeholders such as tenant advocacy groups and apartment owners, as well as environmental interests and the building industry.

“In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, California is taking a strong leadership position in the resilience movement,” added Reis. “We look forward to our collaboration with the SBA and extending the message of the importance of resilience to small businesses in California and across the nation.”

“Small businesses in the L.A. region have faced incredible adversity and seemingly insurmountable challenges over the past few years,” said [Maria S. Salinas](#), President and CEO of the [L.A. Area Chamber of Commerce](#). “While we cannot prevent any natural or man-made disasters from happening in the future, we can ensure our small businesses are prepared to withstand them. Now is the time to promote resiliency and preparedness. We look forward to our continuing work with the SBA and the regional small business community to ensure they remain prepared so they can thrive.”



DISASTER RESILIENCE – Evan Reis (l), Executive Director of the U.S. Resiliency Council, meets with Resilience Advantage educational series sponsor Ali Sahabi, founder and COO of Optimum Seismic, to encourage small businesses to take steps necessary to become more resilient before disasters strike.

Ali Sahabi, Chief Operating Officer of Optimum Seismic, Inc., who is a major supporter of the USRC, echoed the positive tone of the announcement ceremony.

“What is emerging from these milestone achievements involving the USRC’s partnership with the SBA and the approval of the State’s new grant program for retrofitting multifamily housing

can be a model for the nation,” said Sahabi. “We are enhancing education for businesses and incentivizing mitigation efforts rather than simply relying on mandating mitigation improvements such as retrofits. This multi-pronged approach can make California businesses safer from earthquakes and other disasters.”

Major partners in the production of [The Resilience Advantage](#) webinar series include: [the U.S. Resiliency Council](#), [Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce](#), [Los Angeles County Business Federation \(BizFed\)](#), [Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation](#), and series sponsor [Optimum Seismic, Inc.](#) Scores of other organizations and experts in the resilience field have appeared in Resilience Advantage programming.

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About US Resiliency Council

Created in 2011, USRC is a non-profit 501(c)(3) with a mission to educate, advocate and promote better tools for assessing, designing and communicating the performance of buildings during earthquakes and other natural disasters. To learn more, visit www.usrc.org.

About the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce represents the interests of a broad spectrum of organizations across the private, non-profit, academic, and public sectors, including the business community, job creators, and innovators in the Los Angeles region. Our mission is to design and advance opportunities and solutions for a thriving regional economy that is inclusive and globally competitive. As the oldest and largest business association in the region, the Chamber has a long-standing history of convening business leaders, communities, and policy makers to promote a vibrant economy. The Chamber’s vision is A Thriving Region for All. For more information, visit www.lachamber.com.