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Community Foundation Sonoma County Announces \$470,000 in Grants to Nonprofits Supporting Individuals Impacted by North Bay Fires

July 5, 2018 (Santa Rosa, CA) Community Foundation Sonoma County (CFSC) announces grants to help individuals impacted by the fires who are struggling with insurance claims, legal issues, and securing the resources they need to recover.

These grants are funded through Community Foundation's Sonoma County Resilience Fund, which was established in October 2017 to support long-term fire recovery with grantmaking planned through 2022 and beyond. Grants from the Resilience Fund will fall into three focus areas: **helping** individuals impacted by the fires, **healing** the long-term impacts of trauma and **housing** solutions for our community.

Today's grants will go to two organizations working to help individuals who have been impacted by the fires:

- \$220,000 to United Policyholders
- \$250,000 to Legal Aid of Sonoma County

"Our foundation is committed to supporting fire recovery in Sonoma County for years to come and we are so proud to support these two excellent organizations in their work to help people who are facing overwhelming challenges," said Elizabeth Brown, president and CEO, CFSC.

United Policyholders

As a national nonprofit with 26 years of experience in disaster recovery, technical expertise in insurance legalities and a uniquely skilled volunteer corps, United Policyholders (UP) helps survivors meet the tremendous challenge of navigating the foreign language of insurance rules and the claim process, dealing with estimates, damage reports, contractors, and hard-sell vendors while grappling with the pain of profound personal loss.

This grant to United Policyholders offers funding through 2020 to expand and strengthen their recovery support services by piloting an insurance dispute mediation option for underinsured people.

"Successful disaster recovery is a marathon, not a sprint. On behalf of the thousands of wildfire-impacted households our organization is serving through our Roadmap to Recovery program, we are deeply grateful to the Sonoma County Resilience Fund and the Community Foundation of Sonoma County for this support and vision. Thank you for understanding that these households will need us well into the third anniversary of the fire and for making it possible for us to stay the course," said Amy Bach, Esq., executive director, United Policyholders.

Legal Aid of Sonoma County

Communities and individuals struggling to recover from disaster face a myriad of legal issues including problems with insurance carriers, contractor/rebuilding issues, and consumer fraud. Legal Aid's Disaster Relief Program has already reached out to over 2,000 fire survivors since November.

This grant to Legal Aid will support the Disaster Law Program (DLP) to provide legal information and advocacy to those affected by the 2017 wildfires. Assistance will include help with insurance, FEMA, housing, contractors, consumer fraud, and legal services that support mental health. Services will include outreach, clinics, document preparation, negotiations, and individual representation.

"With thousands of survivors still grappling with FEMA, trying to get the insurance proceeds they deserve or dealing with legal issues surrounding their fire-affected housing, Legal Aid needs to be here for the long haul to help survivors recover. We are both thrilled and relieved to have the support of the Resilience Fund to support our community's recovery," said Ronit Rubinoff, executive director, Legal Aid of Sonoma County.

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About the Resilience Fund:

The Resilience Fund is the largest long-term recovery fund in Sonoma County. As of June 2018, the fund has raised over \$14 million for long-term recovery. Grants from the fund will go to nonprofit organizations working in three key focus areas: **helping** individuals impacted by the fires, **healing** the long-term impacts of trauma and **housing** solutions for our community. Over 70 percent of the donations to the fund have come from outside of Sonoma County.

About Community Foundation Sonoma County:

Community Foundation Sonoma County is the hub of philanthropy for the county, connecting people, ideas, and resources to benefit all who live here. Founded in 1983, CFSC works with philanthropists to create plans that will make an impact in our community and become part of their family's legacy.

More information: sonomacf.org