



THE SONOMA COUNTY RESILIENCE FUND

2018 REPORT

An aerial photograph showing a vast area of a town that has been almost completely destroyed by wildfires. The landscape is covered in ash and the remains of buildings. A few roads are visible, with some vehicles parked or moving. The background shows some green hills under a hazy sky.

SONOMA COUNTY WILDFIRES OCTOBER 8, 2017

5,300
HOMES DESTROYED

126
BUSINESSES DESTROYED

24
LIVES LOST

This was a disaster on a scale that no community could be prepared for.

In the midst of crisis, we were faced with answering the question:
what can we do to help?



SONOMA COUNTY RESILIENCE FUND

Here for the Long-Term

It is hard to believe that more than a year has passed since the fires swept through Sonoma County on the night of October 8, 2017.

In looking at the devastation: 5,130 homes and 24 lives lost, property damage estimates of at least \$7 billion, and the ripple effects of an unstable housing and job market, it is apparent that this fire was a disaster no community could have prepared for. It will take many years for our community to fully recover.

We launched the Sonoma County Resilience Fund knowing that while the immediate needs would be great, our community needed a fund that would be there for the long-term, ready to help to solve the unpredictable issues that would emerge over time.

We were able to do this because the global response to our community's need was so strong. Donations poured in from across the globe, not just to our fund, but to funds established by [Redwood Credit Union](#) and the [Press Democrat](#) (over \$32 million raised and distributed to meet immediate needs) and by [Tipping Point](#) (over \$33 million raised and distributed).

Today, the Sonoma County Resilience Fund is our community's only long-term fund. We are incredibly grateful to the more than 7,500 donors who have given \$15 million to the Resilience Fund. Their generosity ensures that our work will continue.

HELPING, HEALING, AND HOUSING

Damage estimates for the fires range from \$7 billion to \$13 billion. Given these stark numbers, the call to be strategic, to leverage our funding, and make grants where they will be most effective is clear.

We chose to focus our initial grants in three areas: **helping** individuals impacted by the fires, **healing** the long-term effects of trauma and **housing** solutions for our community.

These areas of need were identified through a research effort that included [surveying the needs](#) of over 450 nonprofit organizations in Sonoma and Napa counties, [listening sessions](#) with over 150 nonprofit leaders, and interviews with funders who have faced disasters in communities like New Orleans, Houston, New York, San Diego and more.

We are pacing our grantmaking to meet long-term needs which means providing a steady stream of funding for at least five years. So far, we have made grants totaling \$2.4 million. We will continue our grantmaking efforts over these next years with a few key principles in mind:

DISASTERS DISCRIMINATE

In the early aftermath of the fires, we often said “disasters are an equal opportunity destroyer.” The fire did not choose only our most vulnerable populations; the damage was all-consuming. Members of our community needed support, no matter their socio-economic background.

Fast forward to now: it is clear that those vulnerable populations are the most impacted in recovering. If the disaster didn't discriminate, the recovery certainly does, as those with resources are able to recover faster, while others are left behind.

This unequal recovery is worrisome, and shapes our grantmaking strategy, using equity as a lens for all of our disaster recovery grants.

BOLDER, FASTER GRANTMAKING

The aftermath of a disaster is not grantmaking-as-usual and calls for innovation in both process and funding.

One of the consequences of the wildfires was the swift evolution of innovative partnerships. Our grantmaking must match this innovation and urgency with grants to help solve large-scale issues, along with funding new projects and new organizations.

Several of our most significant grants have been to collaborative organizations that did not exist before the fires, and were formed to meet the new needs of our community.

PAYING OUR KNOWLEDGE FORWARD

While the devastation of the fires was extreme, the generosity was equally unprecedented. This past year, we have been buoyed by both the financial support of our donors and the practical advice we received from people with experience in disaster recovery. As we move into 2019, we are deeply aware that ours is not the only community recovering. Beyond the financial investments we are making in our local community, we are also committed to sharing what knowledge we have gained to help support other regions similarly effected by disaster.



October 8, 2017
FIRES BEGIN



October 10, 2017
RESILIENCE FUND LAUNCHES



October 20, 2017
**\$300,000 IN EMERGENCY GRANTS
GIVEN TO 11 NONPROFIT AGENCIES**

WINTER 2017 and SPRING 2018

CFSC staff launch a robust research process to learn what long-term needs to expect.

- Outreach to funders who have been through disasters in New Orleans, Houston, New York, San Diego and more.
- Surveying local nonprofit organizations working on the ground.
- Convenings with nonprofit and community leaders.



November 28, 2017
**CFSC HOSTS RESILIENCE CONVENING
FOR NONPROFITS, FUNDERS**



February 08, 2018
**CFSC HOSTS 10 LISTENING SESSIONS,
172 NONPROFIT LEADERS ATTEND**



JULY 5, 2018

CFSC ANNOUNCES GRANTS TO LEGAL AID, UNITED POLICYHOLDERS



September 6, 2018

CFSC ANNOUNCES \$1 MILLION IN GRANTS FOR HEALING

APRIL 2018

CFSC ANNOUNCES FOCUS AREAS FOR RESILIENCE FUND GRANTS



Helping

individuals impacted
by the fires



Healing

the long-term effects
of trauma



Housing

solutions for our
community

REBUILDING AND LOOKING AHEAD:

The next steps of the recovery will be more complex as people encounter unforeseen financial challenges, cope with trauma, and struggle to rebuild with the funds they have on hand. As a long-term fund, we are committed to supporting our community throughout the years to come.

Much of our work in 2018 was focused on making grants to **help individuals** and **heal trauma**. Looking ahead to 2019, we will be especially focusing on making grants to support **housing solutions** for our community.





Stories of
HOPE
from our grantees



HELPING SPOTLIGHT

Bill Chaplin

When the fire swept through the Mark West Springs area of Santa Rosa on October 9 2017, Bill Chaplin was sleeping with his windows open. He woke up to his house, a place he had worked hard to keep, after years of homelessness, filling with smoke.

“The entire horizon was on fire,” he recalls. Thinking quickly, Bill broke down his neighbors’ door to alert them to the fire, likely saving their lives. His truck wouldn’t start so they evacuated in his neighbors’ car. By the time they got out,

the asphalt in the driveway was on fire.

That night Bill lost his beloved pets, his home, his truck, his woodworking shop, and all of his building tools. Losing the stability of the home he loved, was doubly painful because of Bill’s past struggles with homelessness. “After working so hard to get off the streets I didn’t want to go back there again. I worked too hard to get away from that.”

Facing the knowledge that the owners would not be rebuilding the property, Bill was forced to couch surf and stay in hotels for about nine months while he looked for a stable place to call home. He found that place over the summer, renting a room from a friend who is involved in theater

production, a trade Bill knows well as a founder of Shakespeare in the Cannery.

Trained as a general contractor, Bill specializes in building sets for local theater companies. Theater is a passion for Bill and a source of family and community, as well as livelihood. But losing his home, workshop, and tools has meant that Bill has been unable to work, as he had to focus first on finding a new place to live, and then on beginning to rebuild his collection of tools.

For support, Bill turned to [Community Action Partnership Sonoma County](#) (CAP) and has been working with Wade Anilus, a disaster case manager with CAP. Wade helped first to try to find housing, and now to support Bill's continued recovery from the fires. "It's day by day: there were a couple of times after the fire where I really fell into a bad depression," says Bill. Being without work has left Bill feeling restless. "My housemate loves me, because I've been doing the dishes all the time and cleaning. I have to do something; I'm ready to get back to work."

As a case manager working with people who lost everything in the fires, Wade has seen firsthand how significant having a safe and dedicated space for fire recovery can be, and how emotional. "I generally begin with the emotional health of a client; if they are overwhelmed, it's difficult to address the steps for rebuilding their lives. Oftentimes, people first just need someone to speak to."

He counsels and connects people to housing resources, insurance advocacy and education, legal support, mental health services, and access to money for tools and material needs, among others. Eventually, he says, "The plan is to figure out where they see themselves in three to five years. We want to get them back

to more than baseline, and expand their horizons."

CAP provided Bill funds to purchase a new set of tools, and Wade has been supporting Bill's efforts to find work.

Bill is firmly focused on what comes next. "It's going to take me a while to get back everything I lost, but now that I have a roof over my head, stability, and tools, I can sally forth into the future." He is eager to apply for jobs building sets again, and can't wait to re-join the theater community he loves so much.

He describes his experience working with Wade as a "blur of awesome" and notes his gratitude to the numerous agencies who coordinated on his behalf, including CAP and Catholic Charities.

CAP and Catholic Charities offer coordinated disaster case management through a collaborative called [Rebuilding Our Community](#) (ROC) Sonoma County. The collaborative effort began just weeks after the fires, when nonprofit, governmental, and faith-based agencies stepped up to act as "second responders" in the fire's wake.

In September, ROC opened a new drop-in center, a "one stop shop" for individuals and families needing help with basic needs including housing resources, insurance advocacy and education, legal support, mental health services, and financial support.

At Community Foundation Sonoma County, we are honored to have helped ROC Sonoma County launch through grants from our Resilience Fund.

For more information, or to access services, please visit www.rocsonomacounty.org, or call (707) 535-3349.



HELPING SPOTLIGHT

Catholic Charities

Dreama Goldberg was seven months pregnant and just beginning to decorate her son's nursery when the fires swept through Coffey Park, burning the rental home she shared with her husband Bobby, and his 7-year-old daughter Kamala. They had lived in their three-bedroom home on Pine Meadow Drive for more than five years, occasionally bringing in a roommate to help make ends meet while Dreama worked as a dance instructor and Bobby worked at a drafting shop.

Losing everything, with no insurance

to fall back on, and a baby coming just months later, forced Dreama and Bobby to make difficult financial choices. "We were planning to start setting aside money to buy something small, but I don't see that happening anymore; we've had to use credit cards to pay bills. We went from a three-bedroom home with a roommate to help, to a two-bedroom and no roommate, paying almost \$1,000 more per month. It was working before the fire, but now we have to juggle bills. Every month it's like, 'What do we pay? What do we not pay?'"

Another fire survivor, Nenita Busmire, faced a similar struggle. The senior facility where Nenita worked as a caregiver burned down. While the residents were safely evacuated, Nenita's job, and her

nearby Coffey Park home, were both lost in the fire. Nenita's husband Keith, who works as a golf caddy at Mayacama Golf Club, was also out of work for over a month while the club was closed for repairs. Describing herself as a fighter, Nenita sought solutions, "We had nothing. But you just have to move forward; otherwise it will kill you."

She and Keith were able to stay with friends, but they knew it wouldn't last. They applied for help from FEMA and waited. "At first FEMA said they could only offer a trailer," Nenita says. "I asked if it was possible to find a one-bedroom apartment, and they said they didn't have anything. Luckily God is good: they called us the next day and said they had a one-bedroom available."

Finding an apartment was a blessing, but with FEMA aid lasting only 18 months, they knew it was only a temporary solution. "You're not comfortable, knowing it's not permanent and you have to move again."

Nenita was determined to stay in Santa Rosa, but she and Keith were having a hard time finding a place. "To be able to find a reasonable apartment, you have to have a great credit score. We tried on our own, but it was impossible."

For Nenita and Dreama, facing the possibility of having to leave the community they love, was a heart

wrenching burden on top of all of the other losses. They needed help, and described meeting Maria Arreguin, a disaster case manager with [Catholic Charities](#), as a bright spot in a difficult time.

Maria works one-on-one to help clients develop individual recovery plans, and thanks in part to a grant from the Resilience Fund, is able to provide direct financial assistance to help meet her clients' economic needs.

Dreama hadn't known that help was still available. After filing with FEMA so many months ago, she thought she had received the only available assistance until she received a call from a case manager asking her if she still needed help. Maria worked with Dreama to develop a personalized needs assessment, and together they identified that financial support would be instrumental to her family's recovery.

"When Maria said Catholic Charities could help me with a month's to two months' rent, that was really wonderful. It was totally unexpected, but perfect timing. We've had a chance to catch up on all of our bills, and now we have that buffer."

Nenita had contacted Catholic Charities, after seeing a flier for their services. Maria was able to help Nenita and Keith find a permanent home. Their new apartment, a three-bedroom in Rincon Valley, has allowed Nenita to have her daughter Neal, 18, move from the Philippines to live with them. Neal is newly enrolled at SRJC, studying filmmaking.

Thinking back about the help she received from Catholic Charities, and what it has meant in rebuilding her life here in Santa Rosa, Nenita reflects that Maria really is the best case manager she could have hoped to have. "She even helped with finding scholarships for the SRJC."





HELPING SPOTLIGHT

Legal Aid

Over the past 15 months, [Legal Aid of Sonoma County](#) has been instrumental in helping thousands of fire survivors navigate the complex legal issues related to their recovery. They have done this work, thanks in part, to a grant from our Resilience Fund, which allowed Legal Aid to fund a staff lawyer position dedicated to supporting fire survivors with their recovery.

To date, Legal Aid's advocacy has helped over 3,000 fire survivors and yielded over \$4.5 million in funds from government aid

and insurance companies for their clients.

Directly after the fires, lawyers from Legal Aid began to fight against price gouging, helping clients at risk of losing their homes to landlords trying to take advantage of the housing crisis by raising rents illegally. Legal Aid stepped in to help a senior, who had lost her home at Journey's End but had found a camper to move into. Her new landlord tried to double her rent shortly after she moved in and the advocacy Legal Aid provided meant that she was able to continue to afford her new living situation.

For many clients who lost their homes in the fires, applying for emergency aid from FEMA proved to be incredibly complicated,

with forms and verification documents required at every step. In many cases verification of residency was difficult for people who lost paperwork in the fire, or whose landlords had never provided any.

In one case, Legal Aid worked with a client who had been living in his car for nine months after the fire, and had struggled to get any support from FEMA. Their advocacy helped get his application approved and the disaster assistance he received from FEMA covered his deposit and first month's rent in a new apartment.

Ronit Rubinoff, executive director, explains the sometimes frustrating roller-coaster of denials and rejections their clients face. "Many of our clients were initially denied FEMA aid, and didn't know that being deemed ineligible isn't the end of the story," Ronit points out. "In many cases it just means that the paperwork they filed wasn't sufficient the first time, or that something was lost."

Navigating the complexities of government aid and private insurance benefit recovery can feel like a full time job. For many of Legal Aid's clients, it is an unexpected burden on top of the emotional, physical, and financial toll of loss.

Kendall Jarvis, a staff lawyer, has helped over 150 clients to date, and currently represents over 30 clients who had lived at [Journey's End](#). The residents of Journey's End have faced a peculiar form of hardship.

While 117 of the 161 homes at Journey's End burned down in the fire, 44 remained standing. However, the property suffered damage to its electrical, gas and water supplies and was red-tagged by the city as unlivable shortly after the fires. With their homes still standing, but unlivable, the

residents of those 44 homes were caught in the worst kind of bureaucratic limbo: insurance companies refused to pay for a home still standing, and FEMA denied aid for the same reason. In addition, the property is currently being sold with no plans to reopen.

This bizarre circumstance is proving heartbreaking. Journey's End was a tightknit community and many residents are seniors, living on fixed incomes. The survivors have faced economic and emotional hardships; ten of the former residents have died in the months since losing their home in the fire. For many, recovery still feels a long way off. For Kendall, fighting for her clients to receive a fair settlement is a matter of life and death. "These are people who have heard no so many times. Our goal is to get the residents to be financially whole. We're not going to give up on them."

Learn more about Legal Aid's work by visiting www.legalaidsc.org.



*After the fires,
it takes time
to recover.*

Take That Time.



Free mental health and wellness resources available

CALL OR
TEXT

866.960.6264

or visit [MySonomaStrong.com](https://www.MySonomaStrong.com)

Free health services brought to you by the Wildfire Mental Health Collaborative—an initiative of the Healthcare Foundation Northern Sonoma County. Media campaign supported by the Community Foundation Sonoma County's Resilience Fund, Constellation Brands and Medtronic. Support also provided by Tipping Point Community Emergency Relief Fund.

HEALING SPOTLIGHT

Wildfire Mental Health Collaborative

Long after the chaos of a disaster is resolved, the ongoing effects become clear. Over the fall, nearly one year after the October 2017 fires, Sonoma County was in a critical stage of post-disaster recovery.

This phase of the recovery process, when some people are beginning to heal, and others are feeling left behind, has been called a “second disaster.” Presenting new adversity, loss, conflict, and trauma.

Addressing the long-term effects of trauma is crucial to the overall health and resiliency of our community. Knowing this, we invested in mental health resources that could break down stigmas, and help people access the care they need.

Our grant to [Healthcare Foundation Northern Sonoma County](#) supported the Wildfire Mental Health Collaborative to launch a public awareness campaign in both English and Spanish to help people identify signs of trauma, reduce the stigma of seeking support, and inform community members about mental health resources in the community.

The campaign was launched in concert with the anniversary of the fires, and

Después de los incendios, lleva tiempo para recuperar.

Tome Ese Tiempo.

Recursos gratuitos de salud mental y bienestar están disponibles

MySonomaStrong.com



was immediately visible throughout the county. The Wildfire Mental Health Collaborative placed advertisements on local buses, billboards, newspapers, magazines, TV and radio.

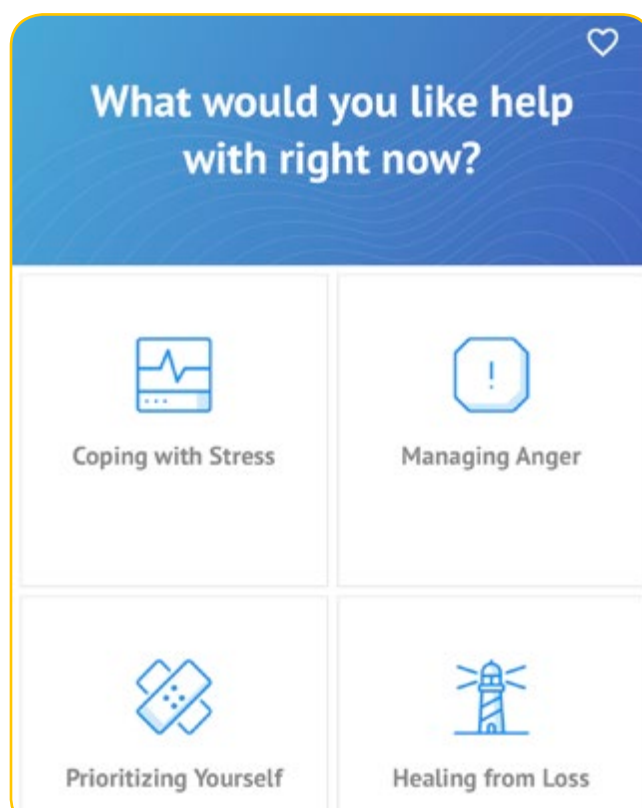
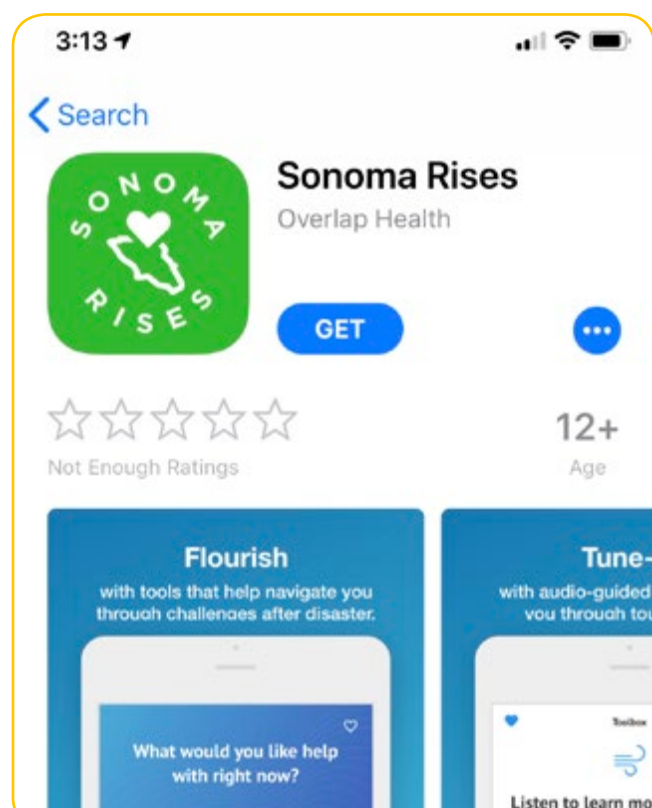
Campaign messages were meant to bring awareness and to help to de-stigmatize the underlying feelings of stress and anxiety many people were feeling.

They also encouraged access to the free resources available to help our community heal, including: the Sonoma Rises app (pictured below) the mysonomastrong.com website, and to the local branch of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) hotline for direct

referral to care, including free yoga and free individual and group therapy.

“We’ve spent a lot of time working to build free mental health resources for our community to access in English and Spanish and the media campaign is our way of letting everyone know that we were all affected by the fires. It is important that everyone feel comfortable and have access to support for healing and becoming more resilient,” said Debbie Mason, CEO, Healthcare Foundation Northern Sonoma County.

Learn more about Healthcare Foundation Northern Sonoma County by visiting www.healthcarefoundation.net.





HEALING SPOTLIGHT

Resilience Collaborative

Over the course of eight days this fall and winter, 115 community members from all walks of life—doctors, social workers, teachers, counselors, waiters, yoga instructors, chaplains—gathered to learn skills to help our community heal.

Dr. Bo Greaves, who retired from practice and now volunteers for Health Action, described the training as transformative. “I learned a lot about the scientific studies

and evidence behind mindfulness tools. These tools are so powerful for neighbors, for communities, for people to learn how to take care of themselves from trauma, learn how to reduce their panic.”

Led by [Santa Rosa Community Health](#), the Sonoma Community Resilience Collaborative is implementing an evidence-based resilience program created by the [Center for Mind Body Medicine](#) (CMBM).

CMBM describes the program’s proven effects on reducing stress and trauma as robust. “Studies dating back to the late 1960’s show the power of mind-body techniques to balance over-activity in our autonomic nervous system.”

With sessions on topics like breathing and movement, biofeedback, meditation and mindful eating, imagery, closing rituals and drawings, and working with children, participants first learned to utilize these skills in their own lives, while training to become resiliency coaches and take their knowledge out into the community.

Dr. Greaves was surprised to find some of these practices had immediate results in his own life, “I didn’t go into this with a meditation practice. I didn’t know about these skills, but now I do it every day.”

Dr. Greaves has seen the effects of trauma reflected in the health of his own patients. “As a family doctor, most of what we treat is people with chronic conditions, people with diabetes, hypertension, conditions where self-care is so important.” He learned that treating people who are traumatized, whether from a single event, like our fires, or the daily stresses of poverty and discrimination, is no different than

treating people with chronic illnesses. “It’s almost impossible to give enough pills or injections to control these types of conditions. People need peace, and self-care helps.”

Bringing these techniques out into the community is a major commitment.

The first cohort of 115 participants completed an advanced four-day training in January, where they learned how to lead workshops in their own community.

They will begin hosting workshops with neighborhood groups, with co-workers, and

clients this Spring. Dr. Greaves says the workshops will help people connect and collaborate. “If I could do this on our block? We struggle with disaster preparedness and it always seems to fizzle. Let’s build the connections.”

To learn more about the program, and the next cohort start dates, visit: www.cmbm.org/sonoma

“These tools are so powerful for neighbors, for communities, for people to learn how to take care of themselves from trauma, learn how to reduce their panic”



**We are so grateful to the donors who
reached out to offer their support.**

Thank you.

**Your generosity makes this
work possible.**



\$15 MILLION+

DONATED TO OUR RESILIENCE FUND

to support long-term fire recovery over
the next years.



7,500+

DONORS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Over 70% of our donations came from
outside of Sonoma County.

*Information on the Resilience Fund is current to January 2019



THE PRESS DEMOCRAT

\$300,000

EMERGENCY GRANTS HELPING TO STABILIZE

The Resilience Fund supported 11 nonprofit organizations immediately after the fire, with grants to fund vital food, shelter and other needs.

Grantees include: Catholic Charities, Ceres Community Project, Community Action Partnership, La Luz, and the Redwood Empire Food Bank.

\$2,100,000 (and counting)

GRANTS TO HELPING, HEALING, HOUSING

The Resilience Fund has made over \$2.1 million in long-term recovery grants to organizations helping individuals recover financially and emotionally.

Grantees include: Legal Aid of Sonoma County, United Policyholders, La Plaza, and the Sonoma Community Resilience Collaborative.



THE PRESS DEMOCRAT



WE HONOR THE INCREDIBLE WORK EACH OF OUR GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS ARE DOING IN HELPING OUR COMMUNITY'S RECOVERY:

- Burbank Housing
- California Human Development
- Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa
- Ceres Community Project
- City of Santa Rosa
- Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County
- Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees
- Healthcare Foundation Northern Sonoma County
- Humane Society of Sonoma County
- La Luz Center
- Legal Aid of Sonoma County
- Lomi Counseling Clinic
- Lutheran Social Services of Northern California (ROC Sonoma County)
- On the Move (La Plaza)
- Pepperwood Foundation
- Petaluma People Services Center
- Redwood Empire Food Bank
- Santa Rosa Community Health
- SHARE Sonoma County
- Sonoma County Sheriff's Department
- United Policyholders
- United Way of the Wine Country
- Volunteer Center Of Sonoma County



Helping. Healing. Housing.

Since we launched the Sonoma County Resilience Fund, we have made over \$2.4 million in grants to support our community's long-term recovery.

Looking ahead to 2019: we will focus on making strategic investments to support **housing solutions** for our community, while continuing our grantmaking work in **helping individuals** and **healing trauma**.

We know that challenges lie ahead, and that the road to recovery is a multi-year process. As Sonoma County's only long-term recovery fund, we are committed to helping for the long haul.

We invite donors to join us in continuing to support the recovery efforts by giving to the Resilience Fund.

Contact us today to make a gift:

707-579-4073 www.sonomacf.org/fire



COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION
SONOMA
COUNTY



120 Stony Point Road, Suite 220
Santa Rosa, CA 95401

707-579-4073

www.sonomacf.org