

The One Year Anniversary of the Napa Wildfires

A REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY





An Open Letter to the Community

October 2018

One year ago, a ferocious series of fires tore through Napa Valley and the North Bay.

More than 1,300 structures were damaged in our community, including 653 homes that were completely destroyed. Seven people lost their lives and 70,000 acres were charred in what is still—after another year of unprecedented wildfire activity in California—the most destructive firestorm in our state’s history.

For over three weeks we lived under a thick veil of smoke, fear and uncertainty. Our agriculture and hospitality economy was profoundly disrupted, and thousands of hourly workers faced serious financial hardship as a result.

Yet even while the fires burned, friends and neighbors rallied around those in need. Some pounded on doors in the middle of the night, saving the lives of their fellow residents. Others provided temporary shelter to some of the several thousand families who had to evacuate, or to some of the several hundred families who ultimately lost their homes. And, a small army of volunteers hurried to lend a hand in our local faith communities and nonprofit organizations.

These moments of brightness are emblematic of the unity and resilience of our Napa community. And they’re emblematic of your generosity.

Within hours of the outbreak of the fires, Napa Valley Community Foundation stepped up, as well. We re-activated our Disaster Relief Fund, offering immediate assistance through a network of trusted nonprofit partners with which we are deeply familiar.

We also pledged to pay attention to fire survivors long after the last TV news vans had decamped from the



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Valley, because we knew then, as we know now, that thoughtful disaster philanthropy requires months and years of investment—particularly when an equitable distribution of funds is an important goal.

In the last year, we have worked in partnership with 25,000 donors such as yourself, and more than two dozen nonprofit organizations to:

- Provide immediate relief and recovery services to 15,000 Napa County fire survivors, including temporary shelter, meals, clothing, medical care, legal aid, application assistance and help to navigate insurance claims;
- Enable 250 high-need individuals and families to receive intensive, ongoing services such as counseling, case management and re-housing assistance;
- Distribute \$4.2 million in direct financial aid to more than 2,100 workers, households and small businesses—who lost homes, personal property or income because of the fires.

In the following pages you can read about how we've worked to aid recovery in Napa Valley so far, and our plans moving forward.

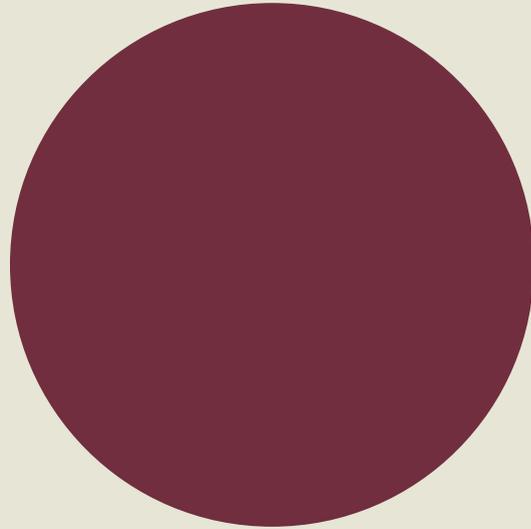
Thank you so much for your support. Because of your generosity and civic spirit, and the grit and determination shown by our neighbors most affected by the fires, we are confident that our Napa Valley will succeed in this multi-year effort of rebuilding.

Sincerely and gratefully yours,

Terence P. Mulligan
President
Napa Valley Community Foundation

Resources Available

(As of August 31, 2018)



\$15,899,069

New Gifts

Total \$18,890,483



\$2,991,414

Reserves



These donors included school kids, families, corporations, foundations, faith communities, other nonprofit groups, growers, vintners and a host of those with ties to Napa Valley all over California, the U.S. and the world.

Fast Facts



Following the 2014 South Napa Earthquake we built a reserve for future disasters. When the fires started, the Disaster Relief Fund had a balance of just under \$3 million. Of this amount, \$2 million was the remainder of the initial \$10 million gift from Napa Valley Vintners after the 2014 quake, when the Disaster Relief Fund was first established.



After re-activating the Disaster Relief Fund on October 10, 2017, more than 25,000 donors contributed an additional \$15,899,069. The largest single gift was \$250,000.



NVCF collected and stewarded all donations; convened public, nonprofit and private sector stakeholders to assess needs, gaps and opportunities—and ways to address them; recruited nonprofit partners and collaboratively developed programs for recovery and rebuilding assistance for residents and businesses; created grant agreements and monitored the progress of our nonprofit partners; ensured compliance with charitable regulations; and adjusted programs and eligibility criteria in response to a changing environment.

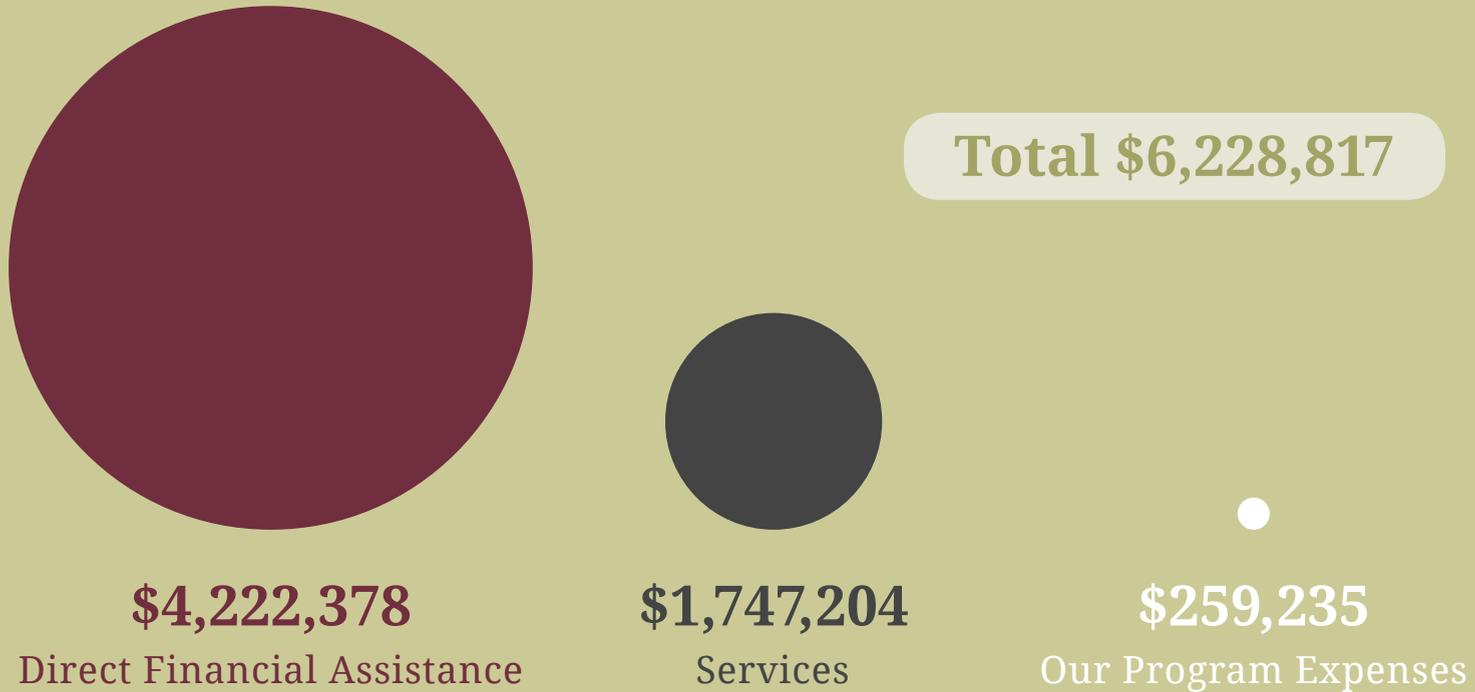


More than 25,000 donors contributed an additional \$15,899,069.



Funds Distributed

(As of August 31, 2018)



All funds not yet distributed are allocated to ongoing recovery, rebuilding and resiliency efforts. Please see page 10 for details.

More than 15,000 fire survivors received critical services like medical care, counseling, temporary shelter, food, clothing, legal aid, emergency childcare, resource referral, help to navigate insurance claims, and other human services.



Fast Facts



250 high-need, low-income households received intensive, ongoing services including mental health therapy, housing location assistance, case management, application assistance, legal and employment assistance, rental subsidies and more.



More than 2,100 households and small businesses have received direct financial assistance so far.

- Displaced workers received grants averaging **\$1,265** to **assist with basic needs** like rent, utilities and clothing.
- Underinsured homeowners received grants averaging **\$35,000** to **help them rebuild**.
- Underinsured renters received grants averaging **\$4,385** to **replace essential household contents** lost in the fires.
- Small businesses received grants averaging **\$18,000** to **mitigate economic and physical losses** from the firestorm.
- Those displaced by the fires received rental housing subsidies averaging **\$4,395** to **help them relocate**.



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The Work So Far



Re-activated Disaster Relief Fund; co-hosted first weekly post-fire COAD meeting.

Recruited nonprofits to staff a Community Resources area within the Local Assistance Center on its first day of operations; for the next month, these nonprofits would help as many as 200 people per day with basic needs.

Created Napa Valley Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD), a network of 68 nonprofit, faith community and government sector groups whose mission is to improve coordination and communication before, during and after a disaster.

Convened local nonprofits and key government agencies to discuss lessons learned from Valley Fire and South Napa Quake.

'15-'16

'16

'16-'17

10/8/17

10/9/17

10/10/17

10/13/17

10/16/17

FIRES BEGIN

Trained "second responder" nonprofits in disaster readiness; struck agreements with each for automatic grants in the event of a future disaster.

COAD liaison began staffing the Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

Distributed \$565,000 for immediate relief and recovery services to 16 nonprofits under automatic grants scheme.





Started a nine-month countywide Emergency Financial Assistance program to help local workers whose jobs and income had been adversely affected by the fires.



Named *Nonprofit of the Year* by State Senator Bill Dodd for work on fire relief and recovery.

10/23/17

10/27/17

10/31/17

1/25/18

5/2/18

6/6/18

6/21/18

ALL FIRES CONTAINED

Helped establish a satellite assistance center for up Valley residents.

Began a program to help small businesses that suffered economic or physical losses in the fires, but were ineligible for government disaster loans.

Launched a financial assistance program to help underinsured homeowners rebuild; and replace renters' essential household contents.



Our Plans Moving Forward

At Napa Valley Community Foundation, we approach disaster relief as we do everything else: thoughtfully, strategically, and compassionately. We know from experience that as time passes after a disaster, new needs and opportunities emerge. In addition to our immediate relief and recovery efforts to-date, we intend to support three areas of work in the years ahead: Healing and Rebuilding, Economic Recovery and the Workforce, and Future Readiness.

Because we understand that disaster relief is a moving target, all grants made from the Disaster Relief Fund will continue to be carefully evaluated and closely monitored. This means we will move dollars quickly from one program to another as particular needs are met, and new needs emerge. As a result, our priorities may shift as recovery and rebuilding efforts progress.





Healing & Rebuilding

\$6M to \$8M (approx.)

- Provide financial assistance to help underinsured homeowners rebuild or repair their homes.
- Support long-term recovery programs to help high-need residents navigate the recovery and rebuilding process, and access additional resources.
- Invest in mental health therapy and case management for those who continue to struggle with the impact of the fires.



Economic Recovery & the Workforce

\$2M to \$3M (approx.)

- Create construction training programs that give local workers career pathways and address the critical labor shortage currently slowing the pace of rebuilding.
- Fund nonprofits that help affected workers boost their employment prospects, access capital for their small businesses, and build savings.
- Explore innovative ideas for matching local jobs to workers who are underemployed.



Future Readiness

\$1M to \$2M (approx.)

- Convene stakeholders to identify issues that need to be addressed before the next disaster strikes.
- Reinstate automatic grants program for nonprofit “second responders;” create a modest reserve for future emergencies.
- Continue to invest in the Napa Valley Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COAD) to ensure collaboration and coordination across ongoing recovery and rebuilding efforts, and in future disasters.

← 2–4 Years →

Recovery Stories

Jimmy and Stephanie Graham

Jimmy and Stephanie Graham, and their two daughters, loved their home high on Atlas Peak, where they had lived for over 10 years. The first night of the fires, a concerned friend rang Jimmy from down in the Valley, urging him to evacuate. Stephanie and the couple's eldest daughter were out of town, so Jimmy grabbed a few things, put his sleeping 3-year-old girl in the minivan, and started down the hill. When fire at the bottom of the road brought all traffic to a terrifying 45-minute standstill, Jimmy was grateful to find his daughter sleeping soundly in her car seat. The next day, a call from his landlord confirmed the worst: the Graham's house had not survived the fires.

“It was beautiful to watch the whole community rise up to support us,” said Stephanie.

Financial assistance from Abode Services helped the Grahams rent a new home in Napa, and a grant from E4E Relief was used to replace dishware and other household essentials. On The Move offered cash aid when an unexpected trip to the emergency room with their younger daughter put additional stress on the family's post-fire finances.



Dale and Linda Jensen

Even after 40 years, Dale and Linda Jensen had never grown tired of the view from their home on Monticello Road. As the flames approached, they worked well past midnight to protect their home—hosing down the roof of the house as well as the redwood deck upon which they had watched so many sunsets together. Ordered to evacuate just after 1:00 am, they put their cats into their car and sped towards town. Within hours, they would learn that their home of four decades was gone.

“I was worried we wouldn’t be able to get our house rebuilt,” said Dale. “Now, we’ve got enough to do it.”

A grant from E4E Relief enabled the Jensens to fill the gap between insurance proceeds, personal savings and the cost of new construction, and United Policyholders helped the couple get the best deal they could from their insurance company.



Tori Ferrell

Tori Ferrell had spent 13 years in her Soda Canyon home, and had evacuated more than once when prior fires threatened her rural neighborhood. She had just finished cleaning up after a Sunday dinner party when the fierce winds caught her attention. Stepping outside to see a wall of orange on the horizon, Tori alerted her neighbors, packed her dogs in the car and fled to safety. Two days later, she learned that her home was gone, along with nearly all of her belongings.

“I’m not a person who’s needed help like this before,” said Tori. “The healing process began for me when I started seeing a therapist.”

Financial assistance to pay for two months of counseling came from On The Move, which also covered a spike in Tori’s PG&E bill when she was working fewer hours last winter. A grant from E4E Relief enabled Tori to replace essential household items, and gift cards from Puertas Abiertas helped her buy warm bedding and an air purifier in the first days of the fires.



The Disaster Relief Fund at Napa Valley Community Foundation supported these nonprofits, and others, to provide services and financial assistance to fire survivors.

Carol Poole

Carol Poole lived in her quiet home at the end of Mt. George Avenue in East Napa for 30 years. On the first night of the fires, a friend called to warn her of the approaching danger. She took only a few things with her—including a rescued red-tailed hawk named Maddie that she cared for as a volunteer for Napa Wildlife Rescue—fully expecting to return a few hours later. The next morning, she discovered that her home, guest cottage, garage and barn were all lost to the flames.

“A month or two after the fire, I made a very conscious decision that this fire isn’t going to define the rest of my life,” said Carol.

To move forward, she first had to deal with her insurance company. United Policyholders provided invaluable guidance in navigating the claims process. “I couldn’t have done it on my own,” added Carol.



A month or two after the fire, I made a very conscious decision that this fire isn’t going to define the rest of my life.

—Carol Poole



Nydia and Luis Sampoll

Nydia and Luis Sampoll, and their three kids, moved from Puerto Rico to a comfortable house near Lake Berryessa last September, after having lost everything to Hurricane Maria just days before. When the fires struck, the Sampoll family once again faced the devastating news that their home was gone. Only this time, they had already depleted their savings with the cost of relocating to Napa Valley, and had lost most of the things they’d brought with them.

“I am so thankful for these organizations and the honest and responsible employees who are working to help families like mine recover after disasters,” said Nydia.

Financial aid from On The Move helped the family make it through a temporary period of under-employment for Luis. Abode Services worked with Luis and Nydia to find a new rental home in Napa, and paid a portion of their rent until Luis returned to work at a popular local winery.

Jerry McConnell

Jerry McConnell bought his home atop Atlas Peak with his life savings, and lived there for nearly 25 years. When the firestorm got too close, he and his teenage daughter abandoned their efforts to save the house. Driving away, they watched their home explode in flames. By the time they got to safety, the tires on their car were scorched.

“It can be hard to see a light at the end of the tunnel. Then I walk through the door of the Fire Recovery Center, and everybody’s smiling and nurturing, and they talk to me. It’s just a refuge where I can share my progress and my challenges,” said Jerry.

A grant from [E4E Relief](#) helped Jerry begin the rebuilding process, and On The Move offered cash aid when dental bills strained a family budget already stretched thin due to the fires.



Anabel G.

Anabel worked her shift as a prep cook at a local restaurant the day before the fires, just as she had done five days per week for years. After the wildfires began, she had two new worries: her work hours were cut in half and the omnipresent smoke exacerbated her young daughter’s asthma. Nearly a year later, Anabel’s employment hours have not returned to normal.

“I’m so grateful that the Fire Recovery Center helped me stay in my home while I searched for other job opportunities and waited for my schedule to return to normal,” said Anabel. “Without their help, we wouldn’t have had a Christmas meal, or presents under the tree for my children.”

Financial assistance from On The Move helped Anabel pay her rent temporarily, and gift cards donated to Napa Valley Community Foundation enabled her to buy the dollhouse and Minnie Mouse playset her daughters had asked for on their Christmas lists.



The Disaster Relief Fund at [Napa Valley Community Foundation](#) supported these nonprofits, and others, to provide services and financial assistance to fire survivors.

Our Nonprofit Partners

[Abode Services](#)

[Aldea Children & Family Services](#)

[Bay Area Legal Aid](#)

[Boys & Girls Clubs of Napa Valley](#)

[Center for Volunteer and Nonprofit Leadership](#)

[Community Action of Napa Valley](#)

[Community Foundation Sonoma County](#)

[Community Health Initiative, Napa County](#)

[Cope Family Center](#)

[E4E Relief](#)

[Fair Housing Napa Valley](#)

[Mentis](#)

[Napa Humane](#)

[Napa-Sonoma Small Business Development Center](#)

[Napa Valley COAD](#)

[NEWS](#)

[OLE Health](#)

[On The Move](#)

[ParentsCAN](#)

[Puertas Abiertas Community Resource Center](#)

[Salvation Army](#)

[United Policyholders](#)

[UpValley Family Centers of Napa County](#)

[Queen of the Valley Hospital Foundation](#)

[Working Solutions](#)



“During the Napa Fire Complex, our staff served as second responders—helping families to access critically needed cash aid and services. Doing this work required us to temporarily drop everything, and took an incredible amount of resources. Napa Valley Community Foundation understood that we needed support not just for tangible items that families needed, but for our own increased operating costs.”

*Jenny Ocon, Executive Director
UpValley Family Centers of Napa
County*



“The Foundation’s disaster training program made a big difference in getting us ready for the fires. If we didn’t have an Emergency Operations Plan and an automatic source of funding, we wouldn’t have been able to mobilize as quickly to provide what was most needed, like mental health support and crisis counseling in the shelters.”

*Rob Weiss, Executive Director
Mentis*

“Since the day after the fires broke out, we’ve been working together to develop programs that would reach fire survivors in Napa County. We know from experience that we must be ready to respond as needs emerge, and our close partnership with Napa Valley Community Foundation allows us to continually develop new ways to help those still suffering in our community.”

*Alissa Abdo, Executive Director
On The Move*



Guiding Principles

We've learned a lot from leading relief and recovery efforts within the charitable sector in Napa County. When it comes to disasters, this is our approach.

We respond immediately but take the long view.

We are committed to working on all phases of a disaster, including making investments in resiliency between disasters. We learned, reflected and adjusted our approach between the 2014 South Napa Earthquake and the 2017 wildfires, and were better prepared because of it.

We believe that direct financial aid to survivors is paramount, but can't stand alone. Very often, those who live through disasters need the support and compassion of other people. Services like mental health therapy, legal aid and assistance in navigating the insurance claims process can be just as important as cash.

We know that disasters don't discriminate, but recovery does. Some families have savings, insurance and access to government aid, while others do not.

Unfortunately, this means that the poor, the elderly, the medically frail and the undocumented often have a much harder time getting back on their feet. The programs we develop take this into account, and seek to catch those who fall through the cracks.

We invest strategically in local nonprofits. Those that work year-round with our community's most vulnerable are best equipped to come to the aid of local residents in a crisis. Moreover, their year-round clients are the very people who often struggle the most with recovery and rebuilding.

We bridge funding gaps and bring additional resources to bear. The charitable dollars we collect are deployed strategically where other sources of funding are not available. As much as possible, we leverage our grants by first tapping into federal aid programs and insurance. We also use the strong relationships we've built with city and county agencies, and the nonprofit sector in our community, to ensure greater coordination and effectiveness.



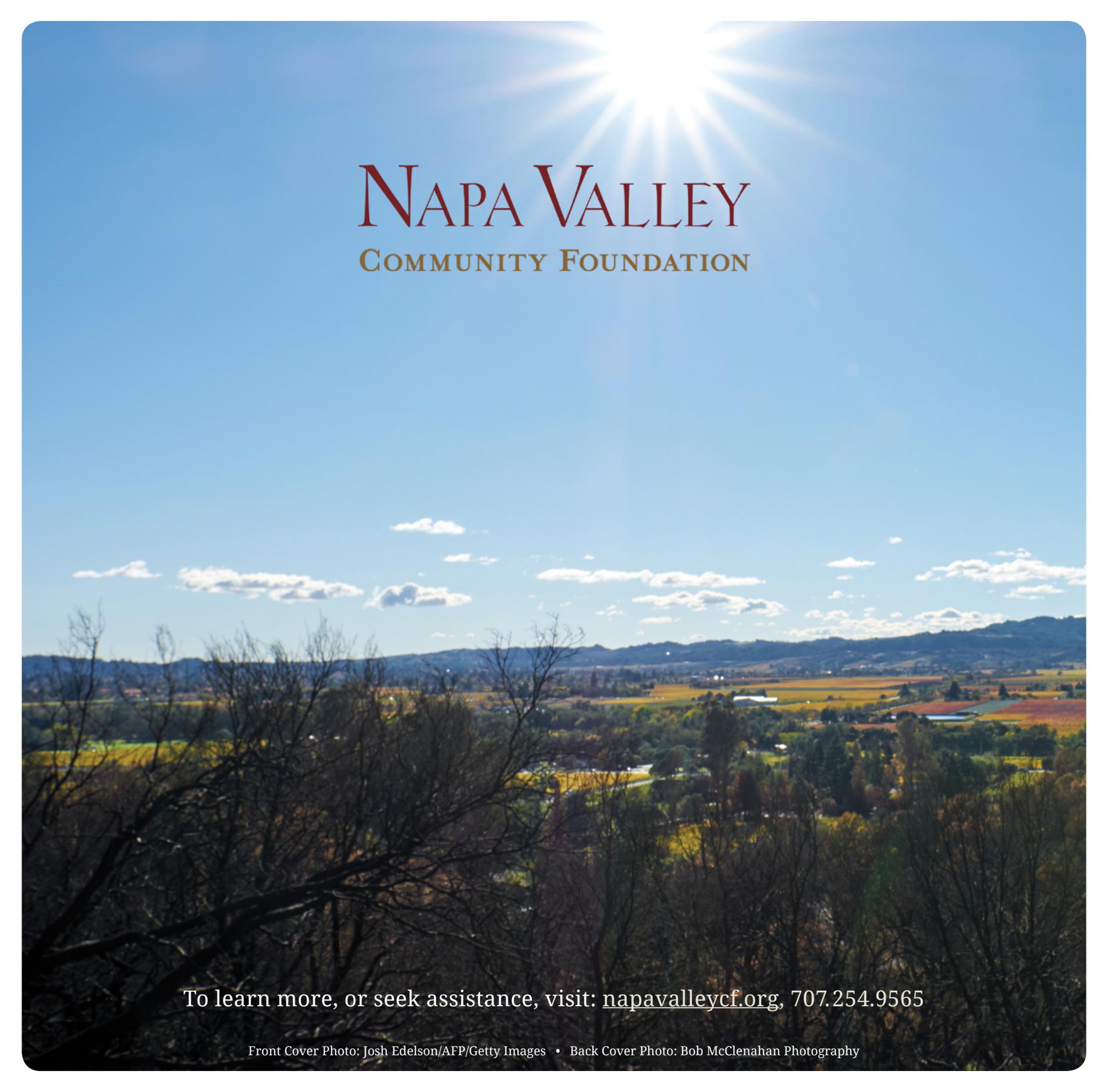
Photo Courtesy: Napa Valley Register/J.L. Sousa

About the Napa Valley Community Disaster Relief Fund

The Napa Valley Community Disaster Relief Fund is managed by Napa Valley Community Foundation and was established with a \$10 million lead gift from Napa Valley Vintners following the 2014 South Napa Earthquake. After all phases of quake-related relief, recovery and rebuilding programs concluded in 2016, the Napa Valley Community Disaster Relief Fund had a balance of approximately \$2.9 million, which was the starting point for current relief and recovery efforts for the 2017 Napa Fire Complex.

About Napa Valley Community Foundation

Napa Valley Community Foundation (NVCF) mobilizes resources, inspires giving and provides leadership on vital community issues—like disasters, immigration and housing—to improve the quality of life for all in Napa County. Now celebrating nearly 25 years of service to Napa Valley, NVCF has served as a bridge between philanthropic families and hardworking nonprofit agencies since 1994, bringing people, ideas and resources together. From American Canyon to Calistoga, NVCF has distributed more than \$50 million in grants since it was founded, and currently serves as the philanthropic partner to thousands of individuals, families, nonprofit agencies and corporations in Napa Valley and beyond.



NAPA VALLEY

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

To learn more, or seek assistance, visit: napavalleycf.org, 707.254.9565