

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**NAPA TENANTS AND LANDLORDS CAN NOW GET HELP  
TO APPLY FOR CALIFORNIA COVID-19 RENT RELIEF FUNDS**

*County of Napa and Napa Valley Community Foundation jointly fund application assistance program to help residents tap into millions in emergency rent relief*

**Friday, September 24, 2021, Napa, CA** - The County of Napa has contributed \$100,000 for a new program that will make it easier for local tenants to access \$14 million that's been set aside for Napa County residents, by the State of California, for the payment of back rents to landlords. Napa Valley Community Foundation (NVCF), whose funding got the program started, was the recipient of the County's grant.

Since launching in late spring, California's *Housing is Key* program has distributed funds to landlords at a frustratingly slow rate, even as more than 1,600 households in Napa County have been at risk of eviction. In early summer, NVCF convened public and private stakeholders to talk about the problems tenants and landlords were facing as they tried to tap into rental relief funding from Sacramento. The Foundation learned, among other things, that the application for rent relief is 39 pages long; must be completed online; requires the inclusion of a host of back-up documents; and requires renters to provide a valid email address.

Since that time, the Foundation has approved grants of \$500,000 to launch a new program powered by four existing community-based nonprofits: On the Move; UpValley Family Centers; Fair Housing Napa Valley; and Bay Area Legal Aid. The collaborative is now available to walk tenants and landlords step-by-step through the state *Housing is Key* application process, including: providing computers and setting up email addresses; providing translation where needed to tenants not fluent in English; gathering required documents; and making referrals to fair housing or legal counseling should more significant issues arise. These nonprofits are trusted by locals and can calm fears about the perceived potential of landlord retribution, or concerns about immigration status when submitting personal information to the state.

*Housing is Key* funds issued by the state of California are intended to prevent future evictions by providing rent relief to eligible residents for up to 100 percent of owed back rent, starting from March last year (eligible renters may also receive help with utilities and three months of forward rent). A statewide eviction moratorium in place during much of the pandemic is expected to end this week on September 30th. Evictions are likely to restart on October 1<sup>st</sup>, leaving eligible renters who have not yet applied for rent relief

vulnerable. The collaborative encourages Napa County residents to contact them to apply immediately to prevent evictions wherever possible.

“We and our nonprofit partners saw an urgent need that was not being met in Napa County,” said Napa Valley Community Foundation President Terence Mulligan. “There are millions of dollars available to make tenants and landlords whole, but without strategic intervention, these much-needed funds will never flow into our community. We are proud of how quickly our grantees worked to develop a program to keep families paying rent in their homes and in Napa County.”

Napa Valley Community Foundation’s response to COVID-19 relief so far includes disbursements of nearly \$5.4 million for immediate relief services and cash assistance. To-date, 27,000 county residents affected by the pandemic have received services like physical and mental healthcare, hot meals and groceries, and education and childcare support; and 1,700 households have received cash assistance because they lost work due to the pandemic’s economic effects and/or contracted the Coronavirus and were placed under isolation and quarantine orders.

To learn more about income and other eligibility and get help with submitting an application, Napa County renters who have been impacted by COVID-19 and are in need of financial assistance to pay rent and utilities should contact the below agencies immediately:

### **Renters**

- If you live in Calistoga, St. Helena, Yountville and surrounding areas, contact UpValley Family Centers at (707) 965-5010 or email [efa@upvalleyfamilycenters.org](mailto:efa@upvalleyfamilycenters.org)
- If you live in Napa or American Canyon, contact On the Move at (707) 277-2721 or email [efa@onthemovebayarea.org](mailto:efa@onthemovebayarea.org)
- Rent relief information for tenants also is available on Fair Housing’s website at <https://napafairhousing.org/covid-19-resources>, or at the state of California’s Housing Is Key website at [www.housingiskey.com](http://www.housingiskey.com)

### **Landlords**

- Contact Fair Housing Napa Valley at (707) 224-7920 or [info@napafairhousing.org](mailto:info@napafairhousing.org)

### **About Napa Valley Community Foundation**

Napa Valley Community Foundation works side-by-side with local donors and nonprofits to tackle the most important challenges our Valley faces. Now celebrating 26 years of service to the community, the Foundation has distributed more than \$85 million in grants to improve the quality of life for residents of the region, and currently serves as the philanthropic partner to thousands of individuals, families, nonprofit agencies and corporations in Napa Valley and beyond.

### **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. So far, the Fund has distributed more than \$25 million for relief and recovery from recent disasters.