

Foundation announces \$470,000 in grants to nonprofits supporting those impacted by fires

The Windsor Times

This week, Community Foundation Sonoma County (CFSC) announced grants to help people 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.

These grants will go to two organizations working to help individuals who have been impacted by the fires: \$220,000 to United Policyholders and \$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.

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, executive director of United Policyholders.

The 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.

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“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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