

PRESENTED TO THE COUNTY OF MENDOCINO  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

APRIL 2021

# REQUEST TO INVEST IN RECOVERY & RESILIENCY



---

**PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY**

MEGAN BARBER ALLENDE, PRESIDENT/CEO  
ROSE BELL, DISASTER RECOVERY MANAGER

THE COMMUNITY  
**FOUNDATION**  
OF MENDOCINO COUNTY

---

# PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The County of Mendocino has access to an incredible asset to ensure our community is prepared for and responsive to future disasters. The Community Foundation of Mendocino County, a trusted and experienced community leader and fund manager, deployed a strong response to the 2017 wildfires and subsequent fires in Mendocino County. The Foundation raised and leveraged over \$4.6 million to help our residents recover and rebuild, offering an incredible service to our community. Simultaneously the Foundation launched the Community Resiliency and Preparedness Fund, harnessing philanthropic awareness of disaster prevention into action within our community. Now we have the opportunity to invest in future recovery and resiliency, securing our ability to respond when disaster strikes.

To ensure ongoing support for disaster prevention and resiliency activities, the Community Foundation of Mendocino County requests \$5.0 million from the PG&E settlement funds to enable the Disaster Fund to respond to future disasters (\$1.5M) and Community Resiliency and Preparedness Fund to reduce our risk in perpetuity (\$3.5M),

Mendocino County residents will benefit from this one-time windfall well into the future, making a long-term difference for the safety and well-being of our communities.

## OUR RESPONSE

Since 2017, the Community Foundation of Mendocino County has been a partner, advocate, and leader in disaster recovery and resiliency for our community. We have stewarded charitable contributions to mitigate devastating loss and helped individuals and families rebuild.

The Community Foundation:

- Chaired Mendocino-ROC, the long-term fire recovery team;
- Raised and leveraged \$4.6M for fire survivors' immediate relief, recovery, and rebuilding needs;
- Solicited funding to staff project management and case management, critical to recovery;
- Provided donation management, fund development, and relief, recovery, and rebuilding assistance for the:
  - 2017 Redwood Complex Fire
  - 2018 Mendocino Complex Fire
  - 2019 Boonville Fire
  - 2020 Oak Fire
  - 2020 August Complex Fire
- Launched the Community Resiliency and Preparedness Fund to prevent future disasters.







# INVESTING BEFORE THE NEXT DISASTER

The Redwood Complex Fire and subsequent wildfires have taught us invaluable lessons in preparedness and disaster recovery. When the next disaster strikes, we will be better prepared through extensive mitigation efforts, more knowledgeable from our hard-earned wisdom, and with an investment by the Board of Supervisors, we will be in the position to immediately deploy resources to survivors and evacuees.

## DISASTER FUND

Mendocino-ROC's efforts were critical to the long-term recovery of our community, with much of the funding derived from donations, and grants, coming in over the weeks, months and years following the October 8th fire. The individual donations, over 3,500 of them, required significant staff hours to process and were boosted by the publicity of neighboring fires in Sonoma and Napa counties. Future fires may cause equal or worse devastation, without the media fanfare to inspire philanthropic giving. This is why we are requesting \$1.5 million to boost the Disaster Fund for Mendocino County. These funds will guarantee our community's ability to respond from day one and support survivors through their long-term recovery.

Furthermore, we have learned from Mendocino-ROC that disaster case management and project management are critical to the success of a long-term recovery effort, and there is little guarantee that funders will provide similar staffing funds in the future. By investing in the Disaster Fund, we are preparing ourselves for future disasters with necessary funding for essential infrastructure and to respond to the immediate needs of survivors and evacuees. Coupled with the wisdom the Community Foundation gained working collaboratively alongside the County of Mendocino, North Coast Opportunities, and other local, national, and international organizations over the past 3.5 years, we are now fundamentally prepared to support our community in a time of crisis and steward the longer-term recovery process.

While the Community Foundation knows how to respond to the next disaster, we believe preventing future catastrophic fires is even more crucial for the long-term resiliency of communities in Mendocino County.



## RESILIENCY AND PREPAREDNESS FUND

To prevent the catastrophic impact of future disasters, the Community Foundation designed the Community Resiliency and Preparedness Fund in 2018 to specifically address preparing for and minimizing damage from catastrophic events. The goal of the fund is to support effective, realistic, and coordinated planning, reduce duplication of efforts, and increase the overall effectiveness of disaster preparedness activities in our communities. These efforts help minimize the impact of disasters on our community and result in saving more lives and safeguarding livelihoods during any disaster situation, enabling our affected neighbors to return to a normal lifestyle as quickly as possible, and for the community to be stronger and more resilient afterwards.

In the past three years, we have raised and granted approximately \$385,000 and improved readiness in communities across Mendocino County - including Westport, Yorkville, Boonville, Hopland, Point Arena and Gualala, Brooktrails, Ridgewood Ranch, Round Valley, Laytonville, Leggett, Willits, Fort Bragg, Mendocino, and Ukiah.

Past grants have comprised of: equipment to fire departments across the county, a CERT trailer for the coast, equipment to support radio broadcasting during disasters, vegetation management, wildfire preparedness workshops, emergency preparedness for family resource centers and senior centers, expansion of neighborhood fire safe councils, evacuation planning projects, mapping projects to assist fire fighters and other responders, and emergency generators. Grants have been made to fire districts, the Mendocino Fire Safe Council, community service organizations, and non-profits providing critical services countywide.

The funding for the Community Resiliency and Preparedness Fund has come from individual donations, the estate of Jane Gardiner, the California Fire Foundation, the League of California Community Foundations, and Global Giving. The majority of this funding was one-time grant funding, meaning that when these funds are expended our ability to continue providing these valuable grants to our communities declines. The Board of Supervisors investment of a small portion of the PG&E funds would enable the Community Foundation to continue making resiliency and preparedness grants in perpetuity to prepare our county before future disasters strike.





---

# AN ENDOWMENT

Endowing a portion of the PG&E settlement funds would fulfill the intent of the settlement funds and provide ongoing support for the Redwood Complex Long-Term Recovery Plan. The plan specifically included prevention, recovery, and resiliency and mitigation measures, many of which have been directly addressed by grants from the Community Foundation's Community Resiliency and Preparedness Fund. These grants have supported the removal of hazardous trees, development of safe ingress and egress, and hazardous fuel reduction, activities that all need to be ongoing endeavors.

To ensure ample funds for these efforts now and in the future, the Community Foundation would use its expertise to establish and manage an endowment fund dedicated to maintaining the total principal amount and, if possible, to increase the value of the fund (as adjusted for inflation) over time, while at the same time providing a relatively steady level of financial support for the fund's intended purpose. Given an estimated annual investment return of 4.5-5%, the Community Foundation anticipates an annual grant-making budget of approximately \$125,000 per year. This means we would invest \$1.2 million back into the community within 10 years and \$2.5 million within 20 years, all while maintaining the County's \$3.5M initial investment forever. And, we would honor the losses from the 2017 Redwood Complex Fire by prioritizing grant requests from the regions most directly touched by that firestorm and/or communities impacted by future disasters.

## TRUST AND TRANSPARENCY

In addition to the Community Foundation's track record in disaster response, preparedness, and resiliency work, we also have a long track record of transparent fiscal management and community leadership. Since our inception in 1993, the Community Foundation has granted out approximately \$20.5 million dollars while simultaneously growing its assets to roughly \$43 million dollars. The Community Foundation is accredited by the National Standards for U.S. Community Foundations and maintains strong fiscal policies and procedures with investment management by Fund Evaluation Group, a company with specific expertise in community foundation endowments. We are a local organization supported and led by thoughtful and engaged people who care about Mendocino County and have a vision for how it can thrive. Over the years, the Community Foundation has provided leadership, expertise, and capital to build local resources and opportunities and serve as a resource for non-profit, civic, government, and philanthropic organizations.

---

# CONCLUSION

INVESTING IN OUR COUNTY'S FUTURE THROUGH THE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION ENSURES PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCY IN PERPETUITY.



In conclusion, the Community Foundation respectfully submits our request for the Board of Supervisors to allocate \$5.0 million to the Community Foundation for the purpose of investing in the Disaster Fund for Mendocino County and creating an endowed sub-fund within the Community Resiliency and Preparedness Fund so that Redwood Valley, Potter Valley and other vulnerable communities can have access to funds for community resiliency and disaster preparedness in perpetuity. Should the County choose to move forward with this proposal, detailed fund agreements would be developed and presented to the Board of Supervisors and to the Community Foundation Board of Directors for approval.

**"EVERY \$1 SPENT ON PREPARING IS WORTH MORE THAN \$2 IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY... AND SAVES RESPONDERS MORE THAN ONE WEEK OF OPERATIONAL TIME ON AVERAGE."**

**-BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP**