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The Aaron Rodgers Small-Business COVID-19 Fund at North Valley Community Foundation will pay $578,000 in rent to help out 79 businesses in Butte County.

The grants in the second round of funding will provide at least two months of rent — and often significantly more — for small businesses.

The fund received a $236,725 donation from “Jeopardy!” after Rodgers, a Chico native and the reigning NFL Most Valuable Player, guest hosted the show for two weeks in April. There was also money left in the fund from the first round of grants. Rodgers then made another large contribution to increase the funding for each business in the second round.

Coupled with a first round of grants in March, the Aaron Rodgers Small-Business COVID-19 Fund has helped 159 small businesses with grants totaling $1,599,967.

Rodgers and Alexa Benson-Valavanis, president and CEO of NVCF, personally called several businesses Friday to tell them the news.

“The first round of grants was so impactful,” said Benson-Valavanis. “I am excited that with the help of Aaron, ‘Jeopardy!’ and the many people who have contributed to the fund we can do this again.”

The 79 businesses include restaurants, retail stores, museums, bars, fitness centers, beauty salons and much more. Locally owned and operated businesses with 20 of fewer full-time equivalent employees in select sectors were eligible to apply.

The minimum awarded was $2,500 and the average grant was more than $7,300.
“We hope that the rent payments will help them bridge the gap to a time when herd immunity allows businesses to be operating somewhat normally again,” said Alexa Benson-Valavanis, NVCF president and CEO. “We know many businesses are struggling with debt incurred during the shutdown. This will help significantly.

“People ask me all the time how they can thank Aaron Rodgers for what he has done here. I’m pretty sure one of the best things we can do to show our gratitude is shop locally as often as possible."

NVCF has mobilized more than $2.8 million in grants for coronavirus relief through various funds.

Rodgers has frequently stepped up to provide help for his hometown but has been a key partner of NVCF since the Camp Fire on Nov. 8, 2018. He was a founding partner of the Butte Strong Fund along with NVCF and Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. He personally contributed more than $1 million to the fund and helped NVCF raise millions more. The small-business fund was unveiled earlier this year and Rodgers has contributed $1 million to that as well.

Here are the 79 businesses that received a grant in the second round of funding:

Helen's Donut Nook
Drunken Dumpling
Gogi’s Cafe
Japanese Blossoms
Fresh Twisted Cafe
Unwined Kitchen & Bar
Chanpheng's Mandarin Cuisine
Windy Chinese Restaurant
Casa Vieja
Son of a Wich
El Rey Mexican Grill
Chicobi’s
Chico Theater Company
California Regional Theatre
FunLand / Cal Skate Chico
Chico Children's Museum
Chico Air Museum
Chico History Museum
Pageant Theater
Terrain Park Climbing Center
Chico Boot Camp
9Round
HYPE Dance Studio
Basis Health & Performance
Curves Paradise
Paradise Stronger
Freebird Yoga
530 Strength & Conditioning
Argus
Joe’s Bar
The Commons
Studio Inn Lounge
The Maltese
Crazy Horse Saloon
Quackers
Panama Bar and Cafe
The Beach
University Bar
Piggs Club
Boba TeaLicious
Butte Meadows Mercantile & Resort
Fleet Feet Chico
Recognition Products
Kats Meow
Tomfoolery
Urban Couture
Pink Willow Boutique
For Elyse
Woodzee Sunglasses
Heel and Sole
Anika Burke
BaT Comics & Games
2econd Life
Mondos Coffeehouse
Gale Vineyards LLC
LaRocca Vineyards tasting room
Gallery Interiors
12 Volt Tattoo
I Feel Pretty Beauty Boutique
Diane Nicole Photography
Sports Barbershop
Envee Hair Studio
Braids By Gabbi
Satori Color & Hair Design
Canopy Hair Studio
Salon Diamond
Fashion Nails Spa
Le Beau Visage Permanent Cosmetics
The Idea Emporium
Enchanted Play Infant & Preschool Center
MC Parts N Stuff
Diamond Dash Meal Prep Service
Glow Aesthetics by Elise
Massage By Jenn Chico
Chico Art School
The Studio 561
Diamond W Western Wear
Wacky Wags Doggie Daycare Center
Great Pair Eyewear