North Complex Fire Grant Program Guidelines

Rebuilding for a Stronger Region

2021


The Wildfire Relief & Recovery Fund supports the rebuilding and revitalization of communities throughout our region impacted by wildfire. Tragically, the wildfires have become more and more dangerous, happen more frequently and are incredibly destructive in recent years. More specifically our region has suffered immensely. The impact of these fires has been felt by everyone in our region, and it will take many years of collaborative work for us to rebuild and revitalize homes, health, and wellbeing for all of our neighbors.

Our goal is to work collaboratively with the nonprofit, government, philanthropic and private sectors to accelerate recovery and rebuilding to create a thriving, resilient and even stronger region.

We are particularly interested in projects and initiatives that serve the most vulnerable members of our community – those with the least resources and most needs, who have the most challenging time recovering. We also seek to fill gaps – providing shorter-term, catalytic funding that is not available elsewhere and has the potential to leverage longer-term ongoing support. We want to ensure that our investments leverage – but do not duplicate – other funding streams and lead to significant and measurable positive benefit for impacted households and the region as a whole.

We are honored to steward investments on behalf of a broad range of donors and will therefore design and implement the Wildfire Relief & Recovery Fund transparently, with accountability and in accordance with the principles of Partnership, Collaboration, Focus on the Most Vulnerable, Leverage, Impact and Sustainability.

See below for more on our specific guidelines, criteria, and process – and please note that we will continue to update the program areas and selection criteria as new gaps, issues and opportunities emerge through the long-term recovery and rebuilding process.
PROBLEM AREAS

OVERVIEW

Housing and survivor assistance were identified as top priorities facing our community in the wake of the North Complex Fire disaster. The effect of sudden changes in population redistribution has a serious impact on the wildfire victims gaining access to resources in a quick and fair manner. Other program areas may be added as significant needs and opportunities emerge. At this time, any work outside of these two priority areas will be considered by invitation only.

HOUSING

Without safe, stable, affordable housing, victims of wildfires will be unable to move forward in their lives and access other vital services or contribute to the economic and social vibrancy of our communities. The lack of housing also impacts the ability of the region to attract the shorter-term workforce it needs for rebuilding and the longer-term workforce needed for provision of vital community services and diversified economic growth.

Pre-fire, we had a critical housing shortage in our region – in terms of both the number and type of homes available and the affordability of them. And with multiple wildfires destroying so much of our affordable housing stock – housing, particularly affordable housing, is cited as the number one issue in need of addressing throughout our communities.

We will work with the public, nonprofit, and private sectors to increase the supply of permanent housing, particularly affordable housing in our region. We seek to leverage our dollars strategically, building the capacity of the whole system to generate more housing, rather than focusing on individual housing developments or units. Our investments will be data-informed, aligning with community-wide housing needs, priorities, and solutions.

While this data is still being collected and solutions identified, we will consider funding in the following areas and add more over time:

1. Rapid re-housing and homeless prevention programs that help families stay in housing or obtain new permanent housing quickly such as housing navigators, landlord liaisons and short-term financial assistance.
2. Exploration and incentivizing of innovative housing solutions such as accessory dwelling units, home sharing and community land trusts.
3. Efforts to reduce construction costs and accelerate development and production such as off-site, panelized, and modular construction and construction training programs to increase the availability of qualified, local workers.
4. Initiatives or projects that provide tools or equipment to help communities recover from fire devastation (such as helping remove debris from properties) or provide services to protect the community from future fires (such as equipment for defensible space considerations).

HEALTH AND WELLBEING

The level of outreach needed to support the communities impacted by wildfires is growing. Case management is how victims of wildfire gain access to a range of services by connecting
survivors to professionals that have resources for support. After multiple fires, the level of individual and community trauma is greatly heightened while the availability of case management directing victims to services has been severely understaffed and underfunded. Providing a system that stands up organizations and agencies that provide case managers, direct assistance and disaster navigators is crucial to the recovery of our region.

While this program area is still being developed and solutions identified, we will consider funding in the following areas and add more over time:

1. Collaborative efforts to create a resource-informed system of care and disaster navigation in Butte and/or Plumas counties including planning, capacity building, training, and assistance identifying and securing ongoing revenue streams for implementation.
2. Capacity building for organizations and agencies that manage case workers and disaster navigators to work across sectors and broaden outreach.
3. Support for efforts to train, retain and recruit more case management and disaster navigator professionals to our region in order to increase access to direct assistance and support.
4. Identify local community-based organizations that can provide systematic programs to support simple unmet needs including housing and food insecurity, relocation and infrastructure needs.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT
While this program area is still being developed and solutions identified, we will consider funding the following areas, and more may be added over time.

1. Select historic landmarks considered symbols or symbolic of the recovery effort.
2. Solutions providing gathering places for future fires or providing fire breaks in vulnerable areas based on expert reports.
3. Projects that are central to recovery, draw people together, inspire hope, or commemorative in nature.
4. Projects which contain elements of resiliency, which are central to community spirit and recovery.

ELIGIBILITY
Tax Status
Be qualified as a tax-exempt public charity under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, be fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3), or be classified as a unit of local government (including public schools). Qualified entities include churches that serve congregations of at least 100 people and the proposed projects or programs that are not denomination specific and meet the specific criteria. Other organizations may also propose projects that meet the specific criteria but may be required to partner with a 501(c)(3) entity.
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Non-Discrimination
Organizations must offer programs and services without discrimination based on age, race, national origin, ethnicity, gender, physical ability, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or religious belief.

Geography
Programs and projects must clearly benefit Butte and/or Plumas counties residents who have been directly and/or indirectly impacted by wildfires.

Use of Funds
Our funds are deployed strategically where other sources of funding are not available. As much as possible, we leverage our grants by first tapping into federal and state aid programs and insurance. The project must not supplant public funding or fill gaps that the government and/or private insurance have committed to address.

Restrictions
The North Complex Fire Grant Program will not consider grant requests for fundraising events, annual funds, endowment funds, political lobbying, individuals, or activities that are restricted to members of a faith community. Capital improvements such as new structures, repair of damaged structures, or acquisition of structures will generally not be considered except for possible short-term, low- or no-interest loans.

Frequency
Eligible entities may not apply for more than one grant for the same program or project within a 12-month period.

SELECTION CRITERIA
Projects and initiatives will be evaluated by the following selection criteria, and priority given to those that most strongly meet the following criteria:

1. **Vulnerable Populations**
   Multiple studies have shown that disaster recovery is not equal and that vulnerable populations have greater needs, fewer options, and longer recovery time frames. Projects will be prioritized that target lower-income households, particularly those that include seniors or children; individuals with physical, cognitive, and emotional disabilities; and populations that lack access to federal or state recovery resources or reside in isolated areas with limited services.

2. **North Complex Fire Connection**
   Projects that directly benefit those most impacted by the North Complex Fire will be prioritized.

3. **Demonstrable Impact**
   The project’s approach (design, delivery, and staffing) is tailored to meet the specific needs of the target population(s) and has a reasonable timeline for implementation. Projects that result in significant outputs and outcomes – either through addressing a

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broad range of the community's needs and/or resulting in an enduring positive impact for individuals and households – will be prioritized.

4. **Collaboration**

Projects that partner with other organizations and stakeholders to maximize impact and minimize duplication are desired. Organizations with strong track records of collaboration will be prioritized.

5. **Organizational Capacity**

Applicants need to demonstrate their capacity to implement the proposed project in terms of leadership, staffing expertise and financial health.

6. **Leverage and Sustainability**

The project is supported by a diversity of funding sources and/or has the capacity to leverage additional sources. It is financially feasible with a realistic and viable strategy for sustainability through other ongoing sources.

**GRANT FUNDING AMOUNTS**

In general, grant awards will range from $5,000 to $100,000 and range in duration from one to three years. Amounts above this range may be considered by invitation only.

*Grant requests larger than 25% of the applicant organization’s annual operating budget will come under additional scrutiny to ascertain the organization’s financial strength and its ability to deliver on the project while maintaining existing operations.*

**ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES**

Proposed grant budgets may include project staff and consultants and other programmatic expenses needed to plan and implement the programs and provide the proposed services. Grant budgets may also include the costs associated with outreach, intake, and evaluation. Administrative costs of up to 10% of the grant amount will be considered.

**GRANT REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL AWARDED GRANTEES**

1. **Grant Agreement**

   Upon approval of your application, you will receive a formal, legally binding grant agreement, which will require your signature. This will include the final scope of work, timeline for outcomes, grant budget, the reporting schedule, and other legal assurances.

2. **Monitoring and Evaluation**

   Grantees are required to submit semiannual reports on project progress and financial expenditures. Please note that timely grant reports will assist the committee in fulfilling its stewardship responsibility to our donors and the community.

3. **Grant Payments**

   An initial installment of the grant will be paid upon execution of the grant agreement. Subsequent grant installments will be paid upon submission of reports according to the reporting schedule in the grant agreement. North Valley Community Foundation (NVCF) may hold issuance of additional grant installments in the event of performance issues.
4. **Public Acknowledgment of Grant**
   Must be coordinated with NVCF and consistent with the guidelines provided in the grant agreement. Contact David Little, Executive Vice President of Communications, at dlittle@nvcf.org with questions.

**GRANT PROPOSAL APPLICATION PROCESS AND REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

1. **North Complex Fire - Small Grant Program**
   Eligible organizations that are seeking $5,000 or less in funding for qualified programs may apply to the North Complex Fire - Small Grant Program. This streamlined process does not require additional documentation at the time of application, but additional documentation may be requested by a program officer.

2. **North Complex Fire - Large Grant Program**
   Eligible organizations that are seeking more than $5,000 for a qualified program must apply to the North Complex Fire - Large Grant Program. This process requires applicants to upload a complete project budget showing sources of income for the proposal as well as all projected expenses. Applicants must also provide a certificate of liability insurance. Note: Any proposal that is requesting $50,000 or more must contact an NVCF program officer prior to submitting. Proposals of $50,000 or more that have not been vetted by an NVCF program officer will not be considered until a program officer has been in communication with the applicant.

**CONTACT**

If you have questions regarding the grant application process or the guidelines, contact Logan Todd, Vice President of Grant Programs and Client Services, at ltodd@nvcf.org.