



**For Immediate Release
April 28, 2020**

Contact: Caleb Dardick
County Executive Office
Caleb.dardick@co.nevada.ca.us
530.557.5044 cell

Nevada County Relief Fund Empowers Community to Take Care of its Own

Fund creates immediate safety net for vulnerable populations and small business during the COVID pandemic; New website www.NevCoRelief.org launched today

Nevada City, CA – With today's public launch of the Nevada County Relief Fund, the community now has a central place to come together and lift up their neighbors and small businesses hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Backed by a \$100,000 "challenge grant" from the Nevada County Board of Supervisors, the Relief Fund hopes to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars in matching funds to support the frontline safety net nonprofits in western Nevada County, who are providing a life line to our neighbors most in need. It will also help small businesses countywide and nonprofits vital to our community with micro-grants to help cover key expenses until they reopen or resume normal operation.

The Nevada County Relief Fund eliminates donor uncertainty about where and how to donate and will put gifts to immediate use locally every time another \$100,000 is raised. With Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital Foundation serving as fiscal sponsor, donations may be made safely and are tax deductible. The newly formed Nevada County Relief Fund is coordinating with the well-established Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation's "Tahoe Truckee Emergency Response Fund," which is focused on eastern Nevada County (www.ttcf.net) to ensure a countywide philanthropic response, and provide donors two ways to give.

Support for "safety-net" nonprofits

"This forceful emergency response paves the way to work together to assist local nonprofits serving those in the most need in our community starting with food insecurity," said Board Chair Heidi Hall. Locals suffering from food and shelter insecurity include the elderly, people with disabilities, families with no income, and those battling substance abuse and mental illness.

The need is vast. Doug Fleming, President of the Board of The Food Bank of Nevada County, said the organization that normally provides groceries to 300-400 people a week at its Grass Valley location is

now serving between 2,000-2,400 individuals weekly. “These are new people we’ve never seen at the Food Bank before, people who’ve not needed food assistance prior to COVID-19: unemployed business owners, wait and kitchen staff, college students, truckers, hair stylists, personal care workers, many of whom support our large retirement community. This virus cuts through all generations and economic levels.”

Granite Wellness Centers (formerly CoRR) is the primary provider of substance use disorder treatment in Nevada County. “Mental health and substance use disorder counseling and treatment operates on a shoestring normally. Now, locally and statewide, we’re seeing decreased revenue and increased costs from COVID 19--and dire need. It’s tremendously challenging, and imperative that these critical services are available” said Ariel King Lovett, CEO.

Support for struggling small businesses

The Relief Fund will also award micro-grants providing key expenses for small business owners and nonprofits struggling to survive until they can reopen, which will be managed by the Sierra Business Council.

In Truckee, COVID-19 has halted commerce -- 82% of downtown Truckee businesses have suspended storefront operations. Brick and mortar “mom and pop” businesses are closed. “Downtown Historic Truckee’s business community faces financial strain beyond comprehension. Many have applied for SBA loans and EDD to no avail. The Nevada County Relief Fund will help our businesses adapt to the new constraints,” said Cassie Hebel, Executive Director of the Truckee Downtown Merchants Association.

“From the hundreds of entrepreneurs our Small Business Development Center has talked with, most of them are geared up and excited to get back to work, they just need some cash to help restock inventory, hire back employees and catch up on bills. We hope this grant can help take a bit of stress and pressure off an owner's mind so they can focus on getting back to business,” said Kristin York, Vice President of the Sierra Business Council.

“As a community we have a history of helping one another and I think this fund recognizes that history. We all need to express our support and appreciation for our small businesses and nonprofits,” said Supervisor Dan Miller.

Widespread Community Support

Last week, the Nevada City Council voted to contribute \$5,000 to the Nevada County Relief Fund. Councilmember Duane Strawser, who also owns Tour of Nevada City Bicycle Shop, spoke favorably of the Fund’s mission to help small business. "This fund is really needed now. As a small business owner, I’ve had zero luck with the federal programs. We’ve been staying open repairing bicycles, and wheelchairs and walkers, too. For a small business like mine, a microgrant would make a real difference – that’s two weeks payroll for our employees."

Shana Maziarz, who co-owns Three Forks Brewery & Bakery in Nevada City, pledged to donate a portion of her stimulus check to the Relief Fund and encouraged others to do the same. "At the root of our community is a deep altruism and care that makes this such an amazing place to live. Recovering from this crisis is going to require us coming together in very profound ways and a certain amount of personal sacrifice, financial and otherwise. I have no doubt we are up to the task," said Maziarz.

Spurred by a robust partnership of the County of Nevada, Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital Foundation, Truckee Tahoe Community Foundation, and the Sierra Business Council in consultation with the Center

for Nonprofit Leadership and the Economic Resource Council, the Nevada County Relief Fund offers a unique local opportunity for philanthropy at every level with an immediate impact.

As Fleming says, “Our community’s response must be all hands-on deck.”

For more information, please visit, www.nevcorelief.org