

Press Release

For Immediate Release

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New Fund to Help Undocumented Immigrants Affected by Sonoma County Fires

1:1 Match for First \$50,000 in Donations

Santa Rosa, California, October 15, 2017—A coalition of immigrant service providers and advocates have launched the [UndocuFund for Fire Relief in Sonoma County](#) to provide direct assistance to undocumented Sonoma County residents who are victims of the Northern California fires. One hundred percent of all donations will go to victim support, with the first \$50,000 in donations to be matched by [The California Wellness Foundation](#).

The **UndocuFund** is a project of the [Graton Day Labor Center](#), [North Bay Organizing Project](#), [North Bay Jobs with Justice](#). The organizations are also coordinating their response efforts through the fund partnership. [Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees](#), a national nonprofit headquartered in Sebastopol, will serve as the fiscal agent for the fund and will cover all administrative costs with the other fund partners.

An estimated [28,000 undocumented children and adults](#) live and work in Sonoma County. Many lost their homes and belongings in the Northern California fires, and others have lost jobs or businesses. Unlike other victims, undocumented immigrants do not qualify for assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Their lack of immigration status, limited English proficiency, and fear of immigration enforcement also impede their access to disaster-relief services, even when they are eligible. Lack of familiarity or comfort with law enforcement, county departments, and financial institutions are additional barriers.

With a mission to provide direct support to undocumented children, families, and communities affected by the fires in Sonoma County, the **UndocuFund** will be overseen by a local community advisory committee, including impacted undocumented immigrants, who will review assistance requests and make funding decisions. The **UndocuFund** will provide assistance to pay for such basics as rent and groceries, among other needs.

“The fires have been devastating for everyone in Sonoma County. Our undocumented community members and their families are not only dealing with losses of property and income, but from the fear that seeking help will lead to deportation. This fund will help some of the most vulnerable members of our community get back on their feet,” said Ana Lugo, president of the North Bay Organizing Project, based in Sonoma County.

“Like other Sonoma County residents, undocumented immigrants impacted by these catastrophic fires, the worst in California’s history, need our compassion and support.” said Daranee Petsod, president of Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees, the fund’s administering agency based in Sebastopol, California. “The **UndocuFund** will provide these vulnerable members of our community with direct assistance to help them recover, rebuild, and continue contributing to the vitality of our county.”

Donations to support Sonoma County’s undocumented children, families, and communities can be made online at www.UndocuFund.org. Checks can be made payable and mailed to UndocuFund for Fire Relief, c/o GCIR, P.O. Box 1100, Sebastopol, California 95473-1100. All donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

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