Bridging to the Future
Sonoma and Napa Counties after the 2017 Fires
A Note on Bridging to the Future

From April to September 2019, the St. Joseph Health Community Partnership Fund led an After Action assessment of the cross-sector response to the 2017 wildfires in the region including Sonoma and Napa. The assessment drew on extensive cross-sector surveys, interviews, and literature review of other assessments and disaster response learnings. We originally planned to discuss the findings of our report, share recommendations, and facilitate some critical conversations with cross-sector stakeholders in late October 2019.

Then, the Kincade fire hit. Within 3 days, over 185,000 people faced mandatory evacuation from their homes. In the days and weeks that followed, 195,000 Sonoma County residents were affected by PG&E safety power shutdowns. The county faced $620 million in losses and $105 million from shutdowns. The fire burned 77,758 acres, destroyed 374 structures, 174 of them residences and damaged 60, 35 of them residences. As the weeks passed into November, tens of thousands of North Bay residents continued to navigate potential and actual safety shutdowns.

Follow up conversations indicate that first-responders, community partners, and philanthropic organizations were even better prepared for Kincade than the 2017 fires. There were improvements in response communications, relief coordination, and delivery.

This is a positive evolution, and highlights the opportunity to continue improving our preparedness and collaboration. As we continue building and implementing our disaster response strategy and look back at our findings from the 2017 assessment and the recommendations, they are even more relevant and ripe for discussion.

As Kincade demonstrated, we all face a sobering reality that there will be a “next time”. Given the new normal of a cyclical fire season and a possibility that other disasters could also affect our communities, we welcome this opportunity to discuss cross-sector preparedness, resilience, and equity in the frame of the recommendations in our assessment report, “Bridging to the Future, Sonoma and Napa Counties after the 2017 Fires”. It is now more evident than ever that cross-sector planning and investment in community resilience, prevention, and systems change efforts have to be a part of the disaster response conversation.

We look forward to exploring these key topics with you to better serve the region.
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Background

On the two-year anniversary of the 2017 wildfires, Sonoma and Napa counties are faced with a new normal, most recently hallmarked by rolling power shutdowns across the region in the face of heightened fire danger and high winds. A poignant reminder of the dramatically changed landscape, the shutdowns highlight that the very real threat of disaster remains the context for the work of local leadership, as stakeholders move from direct relief and recovery efforts into rebuilding, and vigilantly protecting, a resilient community.

The needs of the community have grown dramatically. Affordable housing, mental health, job stability and environmental safety have surfaced as unmet community priorities1, as a larger number of the region’s population than ever before has been made “vulnerable” by job loss, housing instability, and trauma. How does the community of stakeholders most engaged in the disaster response effort feel about its own impact two years after the fires? That is the question asked of more than 60 foundations, government agency representatives and nonprofit professionals, and the focus of this timely assessment.

Methodology

This report, resourced by St. Joseph Community Partnership Fund, a foundation of the Providence St. Joseph Health system that has been involved in the disaster response effort, was designed to assess the cross-sector regional response to the wildfires in Napa and Sonoma. It draws from an extensive mixed-methods evaluation process that encompassed document review, surveys and interviews. The research was supported by a local Advisory Committee with representatives from providers, funders, and local government.

1 Unmet priorities and unmet needs will be discussed throughout. FEMA defines “unmet needs” as “a deficit between verified disaster-caused damages and obtainable disaster aid, including insurance assistance, Federal and State assistance, and personal resources.” This report defines the term “unmet needs” as needs that were created or exacerbated by the wildfires of 2017 and still remain unresolved. This broader definition allows for a longer term and more holistic approach that allows for changes in insurance and construction costs, delayed onset of issues, and issues such as mental health needs that are not always easy to attribute directly to disaster occurrence and that do not follow strict timelines.
**Findings**

The findings of this assessment offer an opportunity to reflect on the region’s disaster response – specifically regarding the alignment and efficacy of philanthropic, community-based and local government resources and efforts. The first section of the report reviews disaster response best practice by sector (philanthropy, community-based organizations (CBO), and local government) as a foundation for the findings, and is followed by research findings and analysis on each sector. Each section explores successes and challenges and/or fund deployment and fundraising (as relevant), evaluation, equity, partnerships and collaboration, planning and next steps. Taking these broad learnings into account, the primary finding of the report is that the region would benefit from investment in a disaster response eco-system, one that aligns networks and strategies and delineates planning and coordination by the three phases of disaster response.

The following tables present findings from the three main stakeholders identified in the assessment: the philanthropic community, community-based nonprofit providers, and county government.

### Table 1: Philanthropic Disaster Response Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Facts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At least $140M raised for wildfire response, with a majority coming as new money from outside of Sonoma and Napa counties. Funds raised had more flexibility than government dollars, and were distributed in a decentralized manner by dozens of organizations.</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Response Achievements</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large amount of money raised and distributed to those affected by fires</td>
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<tr>
<td>Private funding could support groups and needs not addressed by government aid</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation of many funders allowed access to broad spectrum of donors, including non-traditional ones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hundreds of organizations and many thousands of people helped</td>
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<td>(Napa-specific) Activation of MOUs with CBOs post-disaster</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants were weighted towards immediate relief efforts but also covered medium term recovery and long term resilience efforts</td>
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<table>
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<th>Response Challenges</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rapidly changing circumstances and the decentralized funder base made alignment and coordination difficult, leading to some duplication of efforts or unmet needs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crisis environment helped prevent systematic evaluation or data collection efforts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differing strategies, values, and philosophies caused tension between some funders</td>
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</table>
93% of regional CBOs raised new funds post–disaster. Almost every organization was changed and challenged in some way by the disaster and subsequent response. Some changes were beneficial, while others were detrimental. Some organizations suffer from fatigue and a desire to move on, while the impacts of the wildfires persist.

### Changes in Response to Wildfires (n=30)

Respondents could select all that apply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced external collaboration</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced internal collaboration</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staffing Change</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community relationship change</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission and/or program shift</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Severe budget constraints</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership Change</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### Response Achievements

- Flexible and “all hands on deck” relief and recovery response.
- Response to needs of most vulnerable groups.
- Highly rated partnerships with other CBOs, local government agencies, and hospital systems.
- Improved long-term recovery and resilience collaboration.
- (Napa–specific) Activation of MOUs with philanthropy post–disaster.
- (Sonoma–specific) Transform VOAD to COAD; Creation of ROC Sonoma County.

### Response Challenges

- Evaluation of efforts
- Preparedness for disaster response (Collective action plan, Continuity of Operations Plans, Training, etc.)
- Some disaster response fatigue
- Long–term recovery and resilience clarity
As with other sectors, local government was more focused on relief and recovery than long term recovery and resilience. Agencies have faced multiple challenges, and have made efforts to remedy them. As with other sectors, evaluation efforts have been spotty. Partnerships with CBOs and funders are increasingly valued, but commitment to a cross-sector collective action plan is still needed.

### Response Achievements

- All hands on deck as Disaster Service Workers at EOCs, PIO, and LACs in relief and into recovery period
- Mental health response, including crisis counseling and community-based trauma relief
- Massive clean-up and progress in massive rebuild project
- Partnership with CBOs to reach vulnerable communities.
- Improvement of Emergency Response System
  - Alert system
  - Added staff and restructuring in Department of Emergency Services
  - Creation of the Office of Recovery and Resiliency

### Response Challenges

- Initial confusion at EOCs
- Budget constraints dwarfed some response, particularly in long-term recovery and resilience
- Most individuals still awaiting rebuild or permitting
- Unmet needs in certain vulnerable populations, most notably Spanish speakers and immigrants
- Assessment of response efforts
- Implementation of resilience framework

**Toward an Aligned Plan and Disaster Response Ecosystem**

The situation during and immediately after the fires in Napa and Sonoma was chaotic and constantly changing, making alignment and coordination difficult. In Sonoma County, the scope of the disaster was far too great for any one organization to handle and there was not a coordinated disaster relief plan in place. As a result, many capable organizations set out to address the problem, sometimes with minimal coordination. In Napa County, the community had learned from the 2014 earthquake, and stakeholders identified that these learnings and planning efforts, which included pre-authorized MOUs between philanthropy and CBOs and more organized COAD, helped the Napa response tremendously.

An aligned plan represents the next phase of disaster readiness for the region. What are the components of an aligned plan? What does a disaster response eco-system look like? From feedback gathered, such a plan would capture both prevention strategies and plot out future response efforts. The plan would focus on avoiding duplication and filling service gaps, and capture the entire philanthropic, the nonprofit, and county contributions to such an effort. It would identify each contributor’s unique strengths, while making room for the different values, strategies, and philosophies that are inevitable in such a broad coalition. It would recognize that Napa and Sonoma are different counties with different landscapes and needs, but look for ways the neighbors can support each other and work together.

The stakeholders that were surveyed and interviewed through this assessment consistently cited the need for such a plan. Some referred to growth in this area among certain groups and collaboratives, but consensus and clarity was considered “still a work in progress.” Additionally, many respondents identified reasonable obstacles the creation and implementation of such a plan, referring to different organizational missions, the lack of a tradition of collaboration.
in some sectors, time and resource pressures, and even competition as hindrances. Although these barriers are real, they are also surmountable.

**Recommendations**

One of the primary recommendations of the report is to intentionally embrace the Collective Impact Model to help support alignment, measure impact, and address barriers to collaboration. There are many helpful and successful models to review in support of this effort. While the need for a collective impact plan and investment in a disaster response eco-system were some of the strongest takeaways from the assessment, the process surfaced many other findings and actionable items, listed below.

**7 Steps to a Stronger Regional Disaster Response Collaborative**

1. **Embrace the gaps.**
   
   Focus on the joint task of fulfilling unmet recovery need through funding, program alignment, referral and communication. The greatest unmet needs are in **housing and housing affordability**, **mental health**, **personal finances and jobs**, and **environmental safety**. This is the new normal, and a continuation of the response as the effort concludes its recovery phase and moves into the resilience phase.

2. **Consider Collective Impact to facilitate future disaster response and current recovery efforts.**
   
   The unique collective problem of disaster preparedness and response could benefit from the Collective Impact Model. The most effective structures are multi-sectoral and all share five key conditions:
   
   • A **common agenda**, and a shared vision for success
   • **Shared measurement framework**, including agreement on helpful data collection and accountability
   • **Mutually reinforcing activities**, which requires coordination through a joint plan of action
   • **Continuous communication**, which builds trust and transparency
   • **Backbone support**, an organization with the staff, resources and skills to help the collective convene, coordinate and communicate.

   While some of these conditions are in effect currently in Sonoma and Napa, not all of them are fully developed.

3. **Identify a backbone for collaborative preparedness and action**
   
   Intentional commitment to investing in a disaster response backbone entity to help strengthen these collective impact conditions could pave the way for a stronger disaster response collaborative. A backbone entity does not preclude multiple strategies, networks, efforts or timelines or minimize the role of existing agencies, organizations, partnerships, or collaboratives, but it aligns all efforts toward a common agenda.
Improve collective communication.

There have been dramatic improvements to county-level communication systems relevant to disaster response as a result of the wildfires, but there is still room for improvement to keep the myriad individual organizations, networks, partnerships and coalitions connected and aware of each other’s efforts. A particular focus on strengthening the feedback loop between funders and CBOs could improve disaster response planning and action. Whether regional or county-specific, creating a cross-sector communications hub will bolster all phases of disaster response.

Create (and share) an equity lens. Discuss and define equity and vulnerability. Prioritize coordination and cooperation when definitions diverge.

One of the findings of this assessment was that equity and vulnerability were critical frameworks that drove planning and strategy – but that many stakeholders have differing definitions on what equity and vulnerability look like. There is no “correct” approach to defining equity and vulnerability. A deep, honest, and inclusive discussion on equity and vulnerability in post-disaster settings could benefit the goal of effective collective action and collaboration.

Commit to strategies that include immediate relief, medium term recovery, and foster long-term and ongoing community resilience.

Much of the activity and funding went to the initial phases of disaster relief and recovery. It is natural to want to think the work is done after those phases and want to retreat from the task of disaster relief and recovery. However, long-term recovery and resilience is absolutely crucial to true community wellness. Delineating the lessons learned/best practices related to the distinct phases of response – relief, recovery, resilience – and ensuring that all three are current elements of the disaster response ecosystem will help keep the region in a state of readiness.

Community resilience is paramount to disaster response. It is achieved by capacity building, community empowerment, social connectedness and capital creation, improving community health, wellness, and community systems. It should not only be an on-going investment and activity, but one that is also incorporated into any collective disaster response plan and individual organizational or agency decision-making.

Define (and share) success measures.

The regional disaster response could be strengthened by the collective definition of disaster relief, recovery, and resilience outcomes. While there are rational reasons why evaluation is not always prioritized in disaster response, tracking outputs is key to receiving certain forms of state and federal reimbursement, and tracking outputs and outcomes helps organizations to know when they are having their desired impact and when they need to shift gears. Since disaster response is truly a collective endeavor, the creation of a consensus driven system could be utilized by the region or county-level communities and would make that response more efficient and effective.
As an extension of the legacy of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Orange and the Sisters of Providence, St. Joseph Health, Community Partnership Fund (CPF) provides funding and assistance for improving the health and wellbeing of the economically poor, and utilizes the strengths and diversity of residents and community organizations to build vibrant communities. It does this because of a core commitment to health equity, partnership, and system change and through community engagement and best practices in grant making and outcomes measurement in the communities it serves. CPF has a long history of commitment to the well-being of the region, having invested in the community through its Emergency Food and Shelter Initiative (EFSI), Community Building Initiative (CBI), and other grants. In 2017 and 2018, CPF provided direct funding in support of the region's disaster response, in distinct phases of relief (immediate needs of individuals through CBOs), recovery (medium term support to the community through local agencies and organizations), and resilience (long term support for and partnership with local agencies and organizations involved in community building).

In addition to this initial support and in continued alignment to its mission, CPF has recently committed resources to assess the local response to the 2017 wildfires in Sonoma and Napa Counties, specifically looking at the coordination between philanthropic, community based organization (CBO), and local public agency stakeholders. The objective of this assessment is to support the region’s continued recovery and resilience through shared learnings related to disaster preparedness, system-wide disaster relief strategy, and disaster response best practices.

Current State: The New Normal

Countless articles have described the “new normal” in California that was coined by 2018 Governor Jerry Brown. They reference a reality that the Napa and Sonoma communities are far too familiar with. It is a reality where wildfires are particularly intense, destructive, and frequent. The high costs associated with this new normal were unprecedented in 2017. With an immediate cost of $14.5 billion (2017 USD), the wildfires that affected Napa and Sonoma counties – the “wine country fires” - quickly became the topic of conversation around the state and country. The immediate costs of fighting the fire were exceedingly high (1.5B in 2017), not to mention the inestimable emotional cost of fatalities and trauma that tens of thousands suffered. Then there are indirect and long-term costs. According to Center for Disaster Philanthropy, the total economic cost was $180 billion (2017 USD). Another report estimates that of the total cost of the wildfires to the region, 65% are long term. Those longer-term costs include: lower property values and lower property tax revenues, infrastructure and ecosystem repairs, lost business and tourism revenue, and increased insurance premiums. There are also costs associated with risk mitigation. At the writing of this report, Napa and Sonoma Counties face the emergency power safety public shutoff by PG&E to reduce fire risk associated with utility infrastructure. Such preparedness efforts impact the community in ways that no one expected 2 or 3 years ago. Finally, organizations are fatigued from the

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high-stress, high-stakes environment of the last two years. In this new normal, the importance of cross-sector collective preparedness planning is crucial.

**Funder and Service Provider Action after the Wildfires**

The Napa-Sonoma private funding community raised over $140 million dollars to assist in the response to these fires in a very short period of time. This rough amount excludes national, state, and county funding. It is an estimate, and not an exact amount. While an enormous feat, such funds nonetheless did not nearly address the full range of community recovery and resilience needs.

Deploying the relief and recovery portions of these resources quickly took extraordinary effort and coordination. In Napa County, where community leaders had learned from their experience in the 2014 earthquake, Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Continuity of Operations (COO) plans between the Community Foundation and CBOs were already in place to help deliver the funds in the most strategic way.\(^5\) In Sonoma County, volunteers and CBOs flooded County EOCs and LACs with the goal of supporting immediate relief and recovery, an entire Office of Recovery and Resiliency was established, and multiple collaborative efforts to lead all phases of response (ROC Sonoma, VOAD to COAD) were initiated. In both counties, funders reacted quickly, saw needs and gaps and worked to fill them.

CBOs embraced a high level of collaborative engagement with one another, and where they could work closely with public outreach agencies they did. The pressure on local CBOs was immense; these trusted organizations were not only serving the needs of their current clients and beneficiaries, but now the needs of an expanded group of vulnerable individuals. For example, food pantries that were accustomed to serving a specific group of food insecure and homeless were suddenly charged with a much larger population, with the same infrastructure and resources as at the start.

In the two years that have passed, County government agencies, foundations, and CBOs have all made major strides to improve communications, planning and strategy with regard to disaster response. Public Health and Human Services agencies in both counties responded quickly, fulfilling immediate needs of their usual populations and serving an expanded group affected by the fires. They worked with CBOs and provided a variety of mental health supportive services. Permitting, Planning and Environmental Services agencies have worked diligently to remove tons of debris and get residents permits for rebuild.

In Sonoma County, for example, in December 2017, the Office of Recovery and Resiliency was formally created and tasked with developing a recovery and resiliency plan.\(^6\) In June 2018, an assessment of the Emergency Management Program preceded additional investment in this agency; various staff development recommendations were made. The assessment recommended 1) that the Emergency Services Manager to be reclassified as Director; 2) the creation of two additional staff positions to develop and manage a comprehensive community alert and warning program, and 3) the addition of two staff positions to develop and manage an individual and community preparedness program and provide support to Voluntary

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Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD). In the face of an incredible challenge and tragedy, first and second responders to the Napa and Sonoma County fires have many stories of success in meeting immediate needs together. Community leaders have innovated and partnered to resolve longer term needs. New public agencies and roles have been developed and investments made to connect those agencies to the community. Individuals, organizations, and communities have taken on relief and recovery roles outside of their usual personal and professional roles. The successes and challenges that each of these sectors have faced will be explored further in the respective findings sections of this report. The counties of Napa and Sonoma have worked incredibly hard and come a long way in terms of recovery and setting the stage for resilience in this “new normal” context. This report will explore further what has been achieved and will make recommendations for an even stronger collaborative plan for the next time.

Methodology

In late 2018, CPF decided to fund a multi-methods assessment of the cross-sector regional response to the 2017 wildfires in Napa and Sonoma Counties. CPF contracted with Charitable Ventures7, a regional incubator and evaluation services firm based in Southern California. The assessment team identified the following methods to conduct the assessment:

- **Document Review**, including
  - Review of local community needs assessments and after-action reports
  - Disaster response best practice literature
- **Surveys** of the local funder (philanthropic) and CBO grantees
- **Interviews**, with funders, CBOs and public agencies

The CPF formed and convened an Advisory Committee8, consisting of 7 leaders from local philanthropic organizations, the Providence, St. Joseph Health System, and CBOs, to guide the assessment. The Committee was invited to provide feedback at every phase of the research, which was conducted from April to early September 2019. The insight and experience of leaders from the private philanthropic sector, community based organizations, and county-level public agencies in Sonoma and Napa counties comprise the majority of the response findings summarized and analyzed herein. The lens for analysis considers three distinct phases of disaster recovery: relief, recovery, and resilience.

A few words on what this report is and is not. This report is an effort of a prominent health system foundation to assess the cross-sector regional response to a major wildfire disaster in two counties in which it operates. It is an effort to assess the relationship between private philanthropy entities, CBOs, and county agencies, to build on previous learnings, and ideally, share new ones. While there are quantitative aspects, it is a predominantly qualitative research endeavor to unearth findings from different sectors, to see what has worked

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7 Charitable Ventures is a regional nonprofit center for social change based in Orange County. Charitable Ventures is a fiscal sponsor of nearly fifty projects, to which it provides capacity building and incubation and it also provides fee-based consulting services in the areas of evaluation and planning, fund development, marketing and communications, and policy analysis to clients in the region. More information is available at: http://www.charitableventuresoc.org/

8 See Appendix I for the list of advisory committee members.
post-2017 wildfires, what has not worked as well, and why. The findings celebrate community wins, reveal gaps, codifies unresolved topics of contention, and will invite those included in the research as well as those who might not have been to join an ongoing conversation about planning, prevention, and resilience. It is not a summary of damage wrought by the fires, and it is not exhaustive. There will be players whose voices are missing. This is not intentional. We invited as many people as possible to the conversation and captured over 60 organizational perspectives through surveys and interviews. It does not offer certain solutions, but instead ideas and recommendations, and an invitation to rework them until they are ready to be launched into collective action.

**DISASTER RESPONSE BEST PRACTICE: WHAT THE LITERATURE SAYS**

**Philanthropy**

In the context of disaster response, the donor and public pressures on philanthropy to do “the right thing” – to be fair, efficient, and effective – are very high, and understandably so. A review of best practices has a few recommendations that foundations and private donors could heed to cut through some of the haze of those pressures.

Best practices suggest the following strategies in terms of grant process. In order to best support the work of CBOs in a post-disaster environment, it is important to shift the burden away from them and having funder staff heavily facilitate and support proposal development. For example, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation asks potential grantees to make a simple request in a brief format. Key documentation is partly prepared by Foundation staff rather than grantees. Another best practice is to require in all grant agreements that grantees outline their evaluation policy. Ask for quantitative measures, how they use them to evaluate performance, and how they ensure lessons are applied. Despite the challenges of requiring grantee evaluation efforts in a post-disaster response, it is important to include at least some aspect of evaluation. Finally, a third recommendation from the literature is to increase transparency and spur performance, such as by posting the documents for all grants on the Foundation’s website.

In terms of funding priorities, best practices suggest the following. First, one recommendation is for funders to give mini grants to support better on-site coordination. For example, it is possible that a $25,000 grant can catalyze greater synergy of millions. Similarly, it is recommended to consider relief grants will help to jump start something larger when greater funding is on the way, making the contribution more catalytic than just a ‘contribution to the pot’. Another recommendation from best practices is to make active cooperation (not just co-funding) a key criterion for funding, such as making grants to two organizations working together. For example, a grant could support cross organizational care management to provide holistic services to disaster victims. Finally, a major recommendation from the best practices literature is to fund in three rounds: relief, recovery, and disaster risk reduction. A 2017 study by the National Institute of Building Sciences finds $6 saved for every dollar invested in mitigation activities to reduce risk and disaster losses. Risk reduction can be both in the form of environmental planning as well as development of community resilience.
Community Based Organizations

Community Based Organizations have an important role in disaster preparedness response. Though it is the decision of every community what organization(s) will have a prominent and leadership role in preparedness and response, collaborative groups that certainly come to mind include the Voluntary or Community Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD and COAD, respectively).

The literature indicates a few common recommendations for CBO disaster preparedness and response. In practice, those who are part of a CBO know that disaster response, especially when tagged on to sustained usual operations, can be incredibly fatiguing. Some recommendations for CBOs to operate more efficiently and effectively post-disaster, include:

- Additional planning efforts: including Continuity of Operations (COOs); Community Planning for Recovery Operations
- Additional connection with Emergency Response Organizations and Agencies (i.e. communication method, hand-off/referral process)
- Establishment of official communication networks (these can be physical or virtual, but should be recognized and comfortable for the community)
- Long Term Recovery Organizations/Groups (LTRO/Gs) should have clear leadership and roles or they will be inefficient and ineffective. Long term recovery is a resource commitment that should be taken seriously.
- With regard to funding, private philanthropy comes faster than government funding. CBOs are best advisors for government funds, which are larger and might come later.
- Stakeholders should advocate for formal legal and regulatory recognition of CBOs. Because of the importance of non-profits in providing unmet services and enhancing the effectiveness of government disaster response (both short and long term), federal, state, and local policy and regulation should have a place and role for CBOs.

An additional finding for CBOs is that those that seek a relationship with the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) reap benefits of enhanced communication and resource acquisition that helps them to achieve their mission.

CBOs are stronger in preparedness and response when they clearly coordinate their activities with other CBOS as well as with government agencies. Moreover, they are stronger when the government response is strong. The nonprofit sector fills gaps in government funding and functions most effectively as an adjunct to a strong state. For example, the state response was strong after September 11, and CBOs could fill in the short- and long-term gaps left by the government. By contrast, the immediate state response to Katrina was weak and the nonprofit sector did not have the structure or resources to meet immediate needs.

Finally, as in the literature shows regarding the response of the philanthropic community, research also shows that CBOs should be engaged in phases of relief, recovery, and resilience.
Local Government

Local government also has an extremely important role to play in leading disaster preparedness and response. They must connect between the national government agencies, local CBOs, and citizens. Careful planning and coordination are crucial. Sometimes this planning will require Joint Power Agreements (JPAs), when multiple local government agencies have a role in a similar mandate.

The literature indicates that in planning, it is important for local government to do the following:\(^\text{12}\):

- Partner with local resources
- Recruit citizens to participate
- Schedule regular group meetings
- Identify vulnerable groups
- Establish or update an Emergency Notification System and recruit sign-ups for that system
- Establish and practice evacuation plans

Additionally, after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Federal Coordination and Compliance Section of the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice (along with other departments: DHS, HHS, HUD, DOT) issued the guidance to state and local governments to essentially apply an equity lens to their disaster preparedness and response work. Their recommendations include for state and local governments to:

- Reaffirm their commitment to nondiscrimination protections
- Engage with and include diverse racial, ethnic, and limited English proficient populations
- Provide meaningful access to LEP individuals
- Include immigrant communities in preparedness, response, mitigation (i.e. planning and resilience), and recovery efforts
- Collect and analyze data

Leadership, planning, communication with all stakeholders, and equity are all part of the best practices for local government.

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Funder Response Findings

As the fires were still raging, the philanthropic community immediately sprang into action. They mobilized existing resources and quickly worked to bring additional support to those suffering from the effects of the fires. They were able to focus on immediate relief efforts during and immediately after the fires, while also bringing resources to support longer term recovery and resilience efforts.

By all measures, these efforts were substantial and highly beneficial to the community. Estimates of the support provided by the philanthropic community alone are in excess of 140 million dollars. Each funder did what they could, with the amount of funding provided per funder ranging from $75,000 to over $34 million. According to the funder survey, 62% of funders, including most of the large funders, raised new money in response to the wildfires.

The majority of funds came from outside of Sonoma and Napa Counties and drew from individual and corporate donors, meaning that for the most part, the resources coming in were not being drawn from other important needs in the area. Several funders were themselves located outside of Napa and Sonoma. Furthermore, due to the nature of philanthropy, there was more flexibility and responsiveness around how these dollars could be used, as compared to FEMA or other government support. One consistent example is that the undocumented members of the community are not eligible for FEMA support, and may fear seeking any government support. This allowed for the philanthropic dollars to fill gaps, address unexpected needs, or change according to the evolving situation.

However, the philanthropic response was not without challenges. The scope and emergent nature of the fires made it difficult for many organizations to plan, and certainly made it difficult to think strategically as a philanthropic community. This was particularly true in Sonoma, where the impact was especially devastating. Unlike Napa, which had been prompted by the 2014 earthquake to lay a disaster response framework including Continuity of Operations (COO) plans and MOUs with select CBOs, Sonoma did not have a broadly accepted plan in place. Compounding the scale and fast pace of the destruction, the funding community was decentralized without a clear leader or backbone organization. As difficult as it was for individual organizations to plan, it was much harder for 20 to 30 organizations to coordinate their fundraising or response. Each organization went out to their likely (and in sometimes unlikely) supporters and revenue sources, with their own approach and messaging. Each was successful. However, without a unified message, approach, or fund, there was a large amount of duplication of effort, no systematic identification of gaps, and even some tension and conflict.

This tension was consistently identified throughout the evaluation process. There were several organizations that were either not based in Sonoma County, were new to philanthropy, or both. In some cases, more established local organizations felt that the newer organizations were not being as effective in their giving as they could have been. In addition, they believed the new organizations were diminishing the impact the established organizations could have, because their own fundraising efforts were being crowded out by either messaging or the new organization getting to traditional donors first. The effects of this tension are explored further subsection about perceived divisions in the community.

**Methodology**

To gather data on the philanthropic support, a survey was administered in April and May 2019 to foundations that provided disaster relief funds in Sonoma County. The survey was not anonymous and covered areas such as how dollars were raised, how they were allocated, evaluation, partnership and coordination, and future plans. 14 foundations responded to this survey; the respondents are listed in Appendix II. Charitable Ventures staff met with the Sonoma County Funders Circle to review the results of the survey. In the summer of 2019, 11 one-on-one interviews with funders were conducted; interviewees are listed in Appendix III.

**Survey Findings**

The Sonoma-based funders alone reported raising close to $90 million dollars, with individual foundations ranging from $75,000 to $34 million. The median amount raised was 1.2 million.
62% of funders, including most of the largest foundations, reported raising new funding, from the following sources:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individual Donation</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Funding</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant Funding</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundraising Event</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: What was the general source of newly-raised funding? (n=8)

As of May, 50% of the respondents said they had remaining dollars to distribute, pointing to projects that were multi-year or long-term. Approximately $14 million was remaining; as of September, that number had dropped to approximately $13M, with tentative plans in place for long-term recovery and resilience for most of the remaining dollars. In May, forty percent of the respondents said they planned to continue funding “after action” efforts related to disaster recovery.

The survey explored how data and information was used, both before and after funding decisions were made. Only 36% of respondents said that it was “not at all difficult” to get accurate and actionable information about wildfire-related needs, indicating that a majority of funders had difficulty. This stemmed from the rapid and constantly changing nature of the situation, other more pressing priorities, and a lack of coordination among organizations. As time went on, more information became available. Funders used the following sources of information most frequently:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community Partners</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous knowledge of grantees</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional government</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other foundation referrals</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News/media</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: What sources of information did you use to make your funding decisions? (n=14)

Despite the best practice recommendation on its importance, evaluation of the relief efforts was somewhat sparse, with 3 respondents saying they do not have plans to evaluate their funding. 10 of the 14 responding foundations required grant reports; these were the primary way all funders evaluated their funding. Half of the funders responding to the survey could not provide a count for people their funding directly supported, making it impossible to determine how many people were supported through philanthropic efforts.

Funders identified 54 distinct organizations as grant recipients. This is likely an undercount as not every respondent provided a comprehensive list. When asked who benefited from their funding, organizations listed:

- children
- ethnically diverse populations
• low income individuals
• those who lost their homes
• older adults
• agricultural workers
• college students
• disabled
• employers
• first responders,
• homeless
• parents
• providers
• religious congregations
• undocumented
• unemployed

There were several questions about partnership and coordination in the survey. Funders were asked to list both government and non-government organizations they partnered with. Seven respondents listed government organizations, mostly with Sonoma County. Only five respondents listed non-governmental partnerships; most of these were with either other funders or ROC Sonoma. Many funders do not have substantial partnerships, as shown in the following two charts. When asked “how much did your organization attempt to coordinate funding”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6: How much did your organization attempt to coordinate funding? (n=13)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at all ............................................... 8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly .................................................. 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat ............................................ 62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very much ............................................. 15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7: How effective were your efforts to coordinate funds? (n=10)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not effective ........................................... 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only slightly effective ................................ 30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat effective ...................................... 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very effective ........................................... 20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most often identified hurdles to coordination were priorities not being in alignment and a not having enough time to coordinate. Other respondents raised issues on who gets the credit, a lack of clarity on roles, and a “frenzy of response.” Ninety percent of respondents said that having a plan ahead of time would allow for better alignment in the future. These partnership issues were explored much more deeply in the interviews.

Finally, the survey asked funders “Looking backwards, what one tangible thing would you do differently if you could?” The most common response was to be better prepared and proactive.
Interview Findings

Interviews with Napa and Sonoma funders were designed to explore survey topics more deeply while also addressing questions that were not raised on the survey. The most substantial topics discussed were planning and coordination.

Every interviewee offered substantial thoughts on partnership, collaboration, and coordination between funders. As on the survey, there was not clear agreement on how extensive collaboration should be, or what form it should take. Several cited existing forums, such as the Sonoma Funders’ Circle, ROC Sonoma, and each county’s COADs and VOADs. However, few organizations seemed ready to say that any of these was the best leader going forward, or the most effective venue for coordination. Instead, they cited obstacles similar to those mentioned on the survey: varying missions, lack of trust between organizations, an unwillingness to surrender some decision-making authority, not having the necessary time to collaborate, and organizational egos or concerns over getting credit. One philanthropic leader stated, “It’s been fascinating to see the dynamics.” This leader expressed their wish that “foundations would pull together to create a plan [investing] in staff for planning and programs for planning.” Many wondered what structure or model partnership would take and what would be the tangible benefits for the participating organizations or the community at large.

When asked about a plan for the future, the first thing that usually was raised by funders was their own organization’s planning efforts, which included tactical plans and sometimes a loose funding plan for future disasters, and sometimes one key partnership with a CBO or collaborative response group. Reflecting the discussion on partnership and collaboration, there is less clarity on creating a collective plan. There is a definite level of desire to embrace this collective work, as many recognized the potential for increased efficiency and impact if a plan were in place. Still the typical pitfalls of collective action are also evident13. Some even identified prevention as a way for grant makers to collaborate currently. However, some felt that if disagreement about funding priorities or strategies would prevent planning and coordination.

As noted earlier, there were tensions between funders in how to respond to the fires. The interviews with funders identified three perceived divides in the philanthropic response:

1. A divide between a flexible, relational approach for distribution of resources and one that is more data driven.

2. A divide between decision making process that focuses primarily on equity versus one that supported anyone affected by the fire regardless of their socioeconomic situation

3. A divide between grantmaking that focuses on immediate relief compared to those that focused on medium term recovery or long-term resilience work.

These perceived divides potentially stand in the way of stronger collaboration and planning.

Therefore, it is important to identify if these divides are real and meaningful or primarily the result of perceptions. To the extent that they are real, stronger philanthropic collaboration would require identifying these divides and communicating on how a coordinated response effort would bridge or incorporate them.

**How Resources are Distributed**

Under normal circumstances, when deciding how to distribute grants, funders make a strategic decision on how much to factor in data on need, impact, capacity and the like and how much to value flexibility and relationships. The two are not mutually exclusive, and no funder lives on either extreme. That is, no funder ignores data entirely, nor are they completely beholden to them.

In disaster relief, funders often feel quickly evolving pressures to get money out as quickly as possible, and the chaotic situation means reliable data is in short supply. As noted earlier, 64% of funders reported on the survey that getting data was “somewhat” or “very” difficult. They pointed to the rapidly changing situation, the lack of a central clearinghouse for data, an inherent time lag, and the number of players in the relief efforts as complicating factors in getting data.

In this environment, funders reporting following one of two paths. Those that were already predisposed to use data took their time to get the data they needed to make their decisions. They used techniques such as listening sessions, interviews, and researching other disaster response efforts while continuing to look for quantitative information. Some delayed their grant making; others sought to be responsive in their relief giving while relying on data for their longer-term support.

An alternate method was to skew more towards relational and flexible giving. For these funders, they drew more on existing relationships, trust, and the input of community and political leaders, rather than waiting to get and use data or follow a delineated process.

This distinction seems to be real and meaningful. Both approaches have advantages and disadvantages. A more data-driven approach may be more effective in distributing support to the places where it is most effective but can require more time to put in place. A relational approach is quicker but may be less efficient or create service gaps.

While the two approaches are different, they do not have to be contradictory. A coordinated plan could recognize the distinct strengths and weaknesses and create a path by which they complement each other, and lead to greater community benefit.

**How an Equity Lens is Applied**

According to the funder survey, every funder considered equity in their grant making. However, not every funder made it a priority—42% said it was a critical priority, while 25% said it was not a priority at all (the remaining 33% said it was “among the priorities”). In interviews this finding was confirmed, but funders could discuss what equity meant to them, and provide more information on how they considered it in their grant making. The interviews demonstrated that there was not a uniform definition of “equity,” nor a shared understanding of how to apply an equity lens.
For many respondents, equity means that giving should prioritize the most vulnerable, usually defined in socioeconomic terms. Criteria differed however; income was most often used, but others used language, focusing on those with low English proficiency. This would prioritize the undocumented, but many shared concerns that the political environment would prevent undocumented from getting services as they fear retribution. Others gave money to community-based organizations that were known to serve the most vulnerable. However, the traditional definition of “vulnerable” may differ in a disaster. Populations such as older adults, people with disabilities, or renters may become more vulnerable in the wake of a disaster and may be missed by the traditional definition.

Those that did not prioritize equity focused on providing resources to everyone who was seriously affected by the disaster, particularly anyone who lost a home. Their support could therefore go to the vulnerable, middle class, and affluent alike. These funders seemed to be aware that this position was somewhat controversial, but they stood by it. They were proud of their decision, and pointed to the need to help the “missing middle”—those who had substantial need but may have been missed by traditional definitions of “vulnerable.” Others related that in their experience, the more affluent may not have the same social networks or resilience skills, so may not have support systems on which to draw. Moreover, many of the funders that did not prioritize equity in the immediate relief period, indeed prioritized it in funding of long-term recovery efforts.

The distinction between these approaches is definitely real, as differences here will lead to different allocation decisions about who is helped and how, and the impact of those decisions is worth discussing. In the course of this evaluation, it became clear that there is one of the key sources of tension between the practitioners of these two philosophies. Frequent implicit and explicit comments in the interviews showed that funders of both sides of the divide thought their approach was correct. This tension is unnecessary and counterproductive as it hinders collective decision making and prevents coordinated impact of grantmaking. As is discussed more extensively in the recommendation section, an honest conversation about the different approaches is a necessary and beneficial step towards truly collaborative planning for the future.

Relief, Recovery, and Resilience

A final divide was between efforts that focused on the immediate relief and short-term recovery work and those that supported medium-term recovery and longer-term resilience efforts. As noted in the survey results, 60% of respondents did not have further plans to fund resilience efforts. Some funders were eager to distribute significant resources quickly and then viewed their efforts as complete. But even local funders could suffer from fatigue, burn-out, and resignation to the “new normal.” Only a few funders seem to be interested and able to continue the long term rebuilding efforts to increase community and organizational resilience, strengthen community and organizational connections, work to prevent future disasters, and plan for the next event.

This divide is also real, but it need not be a barrier to collective work. A broad plan would recognize that funders have different goals and approaches and would find room for organizations that want to only help in one aspect. An open funder community conversation
would address the importance of all three phases but would also accept that there is nothing inherently wrong with funders being true to their missions or organizational priorities.

**Lessons Learned and Next Steps**

The philanthropic community performed a great service for the community in extremely challenging circumstances during and after the 2017 wildfires. They raised a large amount of money from diverse sources and directed it to individual and community needs quickly and in a more flexible manner than government support could provide. In Sonoma, the funders did this all without pre-existing plans and without much coordination between themselves, which makes the impact of their work even more remarkable.

When asked what they would do differently, the most common response from funders was to have a plan in place. A comprehensive and coordinated plan that accounts for different priorities, approaches, values, and strengths of each member of the philanthropic community could have tremendous benefits if another disaster occurs. The creation of such a plan could have other advantages as it could bring the funder community closer together and facilitate communication and collaboration in the meantime. The creation of this plan is further explored in the recommendation section.

**COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATION RESPONSE FINDINGS**

Napa and Sonoma CBOs responded rapidly and largely selflessly to the immediate relief and medium-term recovery needs of their communities following the wildfires. The following findings draw on a review of available reports, survey results from 31 respondents\(^\text{14}\) and six key informant interviews\(^\text{15}\). They are organized into sections on I) Funding Disaster Relief, II) Mission and Services, III) Partnerships and Collaboration, and IV) Lessons Learned and Next Steps.

**Funding Disaster Relief**

A quick snapshot of CBO fundraising indicates that post-disaster was a time of heavy fundraising and immediate relief and recovery action. Survey results indicate that most new funding raised came from private grants or individual donations. A very small percentage - only 7% - indicated not raising any new funds. In terms of collaborative fundraising, only about one third of respondents indicated benefits from collaborative fundraising. Although many organizations were working to fulfill common needs, funders might not have been funding them in a way to incentivize cooperation and efficiency. Two years into the recovery process, just over half of respondents state they've expended all funding flagged for relief, recovery, and resilience (42% Santa Rosa; 63% Napa), which illustrates a gap in resilience funding. The leader of one Long Term Recovery Group indicated that the “systems [in Sonoma] were designed for funding to be spent in 6 months. Long term stewardship has been difficult for all.” LTRG Leader

\(^{14}\) 31 responses signified a 46% response rate from 68 individuals contacted from a total of local 52 organizations.

\(^{15}\) See Appendix III.
UNMET NEEDS
Survey findings indicate that although 80% of CBO respondents say that there are continuing unmet needs related to the wildfires, and 82% indicate that increased funds would be needed to fulfill unmet needs, 63% of respondents have no plans to raise more fire response funds.

difficult for all”. Another CBO leader referred to upstream investment as a luxury investment that there isn’t space for currently.

These findings indicate that there is an opportunity for the CBO community to discuss and define resilience, and its importance as a crucial phase of disaster response. There is also an opportunity for other sectors such as the private philanthropic and local government to join in this conversation and incentivize holistic strategies that include all three phases – relief, recovery, and resilience.

Mission and Services

Mission and services are defining for CBOs, and they do not rapidly shift them in times of normalcy and calm. There is even negative connotation to change when it is not intentional and strategic (“mission drift” or “mission creep”). However, literature on disaster response, the CBO survey, and multiple CBO interviews indicate that CBOs go above and beyond in times of disaster relief and recovery. There are numerous examples of CBOs and volunteer groups flooding the Emergency Operations Centers (EOCs) and Local Assistance Centers (LACs) to fill gaps and support. Catholic Charities in Santa Rosa, and the Napa Valley COAD/Long Term Recovery Group took on the task of administering Disaster Case Management, which made them hubs of recovery activity in their communities. St. Vincent de Paul received flexible funding to fill needs related to housing that arose, which allowed them to develop programs accordingly. The organization responded with programs such as House in a Box, which provided furniture to those who had lost everything, and provided funding to Burbank Housing to get Journey’s End mobile home residents in safe, permanent housing. ROC Sonoma provided over 4,000 cases of water over 18 months to those who had lost their homes in the fires and had been relocated to trailers on the Fair Grounds. Sonoma County Churches United provided free childcare to families who had lost their usual childcare services.

Filling gaps is what the social sector does. It can also lead to organizations being stretched very thin and to become fatigued. Survey findings indicate an incredible level of change in the two years following the wildfires. Rapid change, even if mostly positive in service of immediate relief and recovery, can be exhausting for CBO leaders and staff. The table below illustrate what sorts of change CBOs experienced.

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17 The administrating groups delegated to trusted CBOs and volunteer groups. In the case of Napa, this included delegating to On the Move, Up Valley, and others. In the case of Sonoma, to Catholic Charities.
18 ROC Sonoma is technically a volunteer collaborative of organizations and not a CBO, but is included in this section.
Prior to the fires, CBOs served a variety of target populations, nearly half of them expanded their service populations in fire response, and many developed new programs. The table below illustrates the populations traditionally served by CBOs that responded to the survey.

Other populations served as indicated by some (albeit fewer) CBO survey respondents, included: uninsured adults who are ineligible for public programs, LGBTQ, disabled individuals, substance abusers, immigrants, those with mental health issues, community-based and faith-based orgs, those with a serious illness, probationers and parolees, veterans, chronically homeless, and families.

47% of CBO respondents indicated that their service populations changed as a result of the wildfires. Although not the majority, this level of change is still very relevant. Those that...
experienced changes expanded services to recently displaced individuals, those who recently lost their job as a result of the fires, older adults, and those with a moderate income.

CBOs that developed new programs in response to the wildfires did so in the areas of mental health services (yoga, meditation, crisis counseling, free mental health services, school-based mental health services); disaster preparedness/relief services/toolkit development; disaster case management; financial coaching; workforce services; food insecurity; and policy advocacy. Several respondents indicated a stronger relationship with the COAD in Napa.

These efforts and others by CBO leaders and staff constituted veritable rescue and relief services in a time of tragedy. Today, two years after the fires, there are unmet needs still remaining to be fulfilled and not all CBOs will remain in the field of long-term recovery and resilience. Many are exhausted from their response to the relief and medium-term recovery call. The question is who will remain involved and lead beyond the period of disaster case management?

**Equity and Evaluation**

Although the CBOs were not surveyed about their engagement with evaluation and equity, five CBO leaders were interviewed on the topics.

In terms of evaluation, two of the five organizations had completed evaluation, one would be evaluating soon (at the close of the official “long-term recovery” period), and two organizations did not prioritize evaluation. Those organizations that did evaluate said that it was required and part of their infrastructure to do so. They were also more familiar with disaster response and thus, know the concepts and goals of this response better, which might have allowed them to evaluate and learn more readily. The other organizations did not because it simply wasn't prioritized, and/or they didn't have the capacity. This could indicate an opportunity to incentivize evaluation and to build organizational capacity to evaluate.

When asked about equity, three of five organizational leaders expressed that they prioritized equity in their relief, recovery, and disaster case management efforts. They used a variety of criteria to identify most in need, including minority racial/ethnic groups, low-income, LEP individual demographics. One leader indicated that their organization served “vulnerable” populations, which doesn’t necessarily translate to the above groups. Finally, the fifth leader indicated that for equitable disaster response to actually occur, that systems need to change. This individual’s perspective was that equity needs to be institutionalized and the policy level before it can be implemented through philanthropic, CBO, and government actions.

**Partnerships and Collaboration**

In theory, partnerships and collaboration can make hard work more efficient and effective. Survey and interview findings point to a high level of partnership and collaboration between CBOs to fulfill relief and recovery needs. The most common CBOs mentioned with regard to partner and collaborative relationships include: Catholic Charities, On the Move, UpValley Family Centers, Red Cross, Community Action Partnership, and Redwood Community Health. The strongest relationships were those that were pre-existing before the fires, which underlines the importance of pre-disaster relationship building and planning. 70% of survey
respondents indicated that their relationships with the CBOs with which they collaborated pre-existed the fires. 86% indicated that their relationships were strengthened as a result of wildfire collaboration and 90% felt that communication was clear. A smaller percentage (79%) reported that they felt roles and responsibilities in these relationships were clear, while other suggested improvements such as:

- More defined and clear roles and responsibilities for who would do what, who is in charge, who is handling which priorities, etc.
- Pre-planning
- Better communication and frequency of communication

CBOs also indicated a high level of partnership and collaboration with government agencies too, albeit less than with other CBOs. The most commonly indicated local government agencies with which CBOs partners or collaborated were the County of Sonoma, City of Santa Rosa, Sonoma County Behavior Health, Napa Sheriff’s Department, Napa County Department of Health and Human Services, Sonoma County Office of Recovery and Resiliency. More CBO-local government relationships were built as a result of fire response then CBO-CBO relationships. 60% of survey respondents indicated that these relationships existed prior to the wildfires. Similarly, the strength, clarity of communication and roles and responsibilities with government agencies were slightly lower for CBO-local government than CBO-CBO. 83% of respondents indicated that relationships were strengthened as a result of wildfire collaboration. 71% stated that communication was clear and 64% stated roles and responsibilities were clear. Top things that could have improved the effectiveness of the relationships with government include communication, planning and preparation, and a better understanding of systems, the government’s ability to offer support, roles and responsibilities in responding to disaster, service delivery expectations, etc.

As for CBO relationships with the St. Joseph Health Hospital System, for those who had one, the majority (73% of those who had one) expressed that it was “very effective”. 40% of respondents did not report a relationship with the hospital ministry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10: Effectiveness of Collaboration with St. Joseph Health Hospital</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effectiveness of Collaboration Relationship with St. Joseph Health Hospital Ministry (n=30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very effective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Given that CBOs rate their partnership and collaboration with other CBOs, local government agencies, and hospital ministries as very effective, this is a positive springboard for further, deepened collective work. For that future work to be even more effective, those involved have expressed a need for 1) pre-planning, 2) more clearly defined roles, especially around who is the lead, 3) clear shared priorities, and 4) more frequent and improved communication. These are usually stumbling blocks for effective collective action, and the fact that the community itself recognizes them, is further evidence that to strengthen such components is key to success.

**Lessons Learned & Next Steps**

Since unmet needs still exist, this is a time for CBOs, funders, and local government agencies to come together and be sure of the collective strategy going forward to fulfill them. This strategy will require a quantified description of the needs and/or goals and will need to identify the key groups in each sector to fulfill them.

In terms of planning for next time, it will be important begin planning now as a cross-sector collective. In terms of the role of CBOs, those that are best fit for immediate relief, medium term and long-term recovery, and resilience should be identified in advance. Based on their mandate, COADs and LTRGs such as ROC Sonoma County Fire Recovery, can be common sense fits for strategic leadership in the CBO community. However, if these groups are leaned on as leaders, it is crucial that all sectors identify them as such prior to a disaster, and that they are staffed. Multiple CBO leaders reiterated the importance of compensating leadership of COADs and LTRGs, because of the amount of work required.

There are examples that demonstrate the effectiveness of setting up funding relationships in advance of disaster, for example through Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) as was done between the Napa Valley Community Foundation and On the Move prior to the 2017 wildfires. Since a local community in the region has knowledge of navigating such a process, Sonoma players might look to Napa if and when questions arise.

In addition to pre-planning funding relationships, there are opportunities to map and plan by topic of concern or need. Take the example of mental health. The American Red Cross and the Healthcare Foundation of Northern Sonoma County worked together to map mental health organizations in Ventura and Butte Counties, and the timing that services would be needed from each of these organizations. The Executive Director of the American Red Cross, California Wildfire Recovery Program suggests that this is something that could arguably been done on other needs/concerns as well (i.e. physical health, shelter, food access, etc.).

Finally, findings indicate that in order to have effective collaborative response, communication needs improvement, leadership and supporting roles and responsibilities need clarification, and shared goals need to be defined to facilitate evaluation.

**Full Circle: Did Philanthropic Response Help or Hinder?**

While the philanthropic response has certainly helped CBOs meet the immediate and medium-term relief and recovery needs, there is more work that needs to be done in terms of defining partnerships for longer term recovery and resilience work. Additionally, while many
funders required reports from their grantees, others did not. This is due to a variety of reasons, including the desire of funders to reduce undue burden on “second-responder” CBOs. When asked whether they did their own evaluation, CBO leaders indicated that during relief and recovery chaos, evaluation didn’t seem to be the number one priority, but rather, providing fast, effective services took precedent. Much of the evaluation that has been done is necessary for Federal fund reimbursement and is process measure (outputs) oriented. The philanthropic community can work with CBOs and local government to define recovery and resilience outcomes and to incentivize evaluative engagement with those measures.

**A TALE OF TWO CITIES: PUBLIC SECTOR - COUNTY LEVEL FINDINGS**

Nine key county agency Directors and Managers from Napa and Sonoma were interviewed about their experiences in fire response. They were asked to describe their agency’s involvement, their greatest success, greatest challenge, approach to evaluation, partnerships and collaboration, and planning and prevention. Some key disaster response roles that the counties of Napa and Sonoma held included: dissemination of public information and communication, leadership and coordination of immediate relief at the EOCs and LACs, tactical building assessment and debris removal, mental and behavioral health and wellness service provision, and leadership on the rebuild effort.

**Successes**

Napa and Sonoma County agencies have achieved substantial progress in a variety of rebuild and recovery areas and have also done some work in long-term resilience.

All city and county employees are designated as Disaster Service Workers (DSWs) in disaster response. Therefore, it was officially “all hands on deck” for city and county staff immediately after the wildfires. In immediate relief, various agencies played a major role in setting up and managing EOCs and LACs. Permits Sonoma was in charge of the planning section of the EOC. The Director indicated that despite the success of the EOC, there were a lot of learnings. With 775 people working the EOC in Santa Rosa, it was described as overwhelmed, and infrastructure capacity was an issue. The Sonoma Permits Director described the LAC as “incredible”. As fire was still burning and encroaching upon the City of Santa Rosa, the City and County joined together to put up the LAC. Although they did not have a history of working together, they came together under one roof and provided a variety of emergency relief services to residents (SSA, DMA, nonprofit services, childcare, snacks, mental health support, etc.). Within 2 to 4 hours, residents who had lost everything could appeal to the LAC for assistance and emerge with proof of their SSN, Driver’s License, and the start of a rebuild strategy. Although there were some Spanish speakers on site for LEP residents, county employees recognize that the political climate and the Federal employees that guard many service centers (from DHS, FEMA, etc.) made many immigrants fear seeking services; furthermore, many undocumented immigrants would be ineligible for government services altogether. This will be discussed further in the challenges section. In recognition of this failure to meet needs

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effectively, agencies indicate that they are further strengthening relationships with nonprofits to call on. Collaboration with trusted CBOs and funding partners enhanced the successes of the EOC response as will be discussed further in the section on Partnerships and Collaboration.

The efforts of Public Health, Behavioral Health Division, and Human Services supported the relief, recovery, and resilience needs of the Counties' most vulnerable. The Department of Human Services did a lot of case management at the EOC Shelter (not supported by the Red Cross) and LAC. The Napa County Director of Public Health oversaw coordination of medical operations at the local EOC. In this case, the Director indicated that plans written in response to previous disasters and relationships developed through previous response were helpful in coordinating recovery. The Sonoma County Director of Public Health pointed to the amount of work done in terms of disaster planning and preparation, as well as in support of mental health and wellness. As a Public Health entity, this office focused on individual and community capacity building. One example is through the implementation of trauma relief programs designed by The Center for Mind-Body Medicine. Cohorts of residents were trained to instruct trauma-informed mindfulness and stress management skills to their communities. The California Helping Outreach Possibilities Empowering (HOPE) program was also an effort to provide field-based crisis counseling to fire survivors. This high-demand program was implemented with targeted groups and received a good deal of anecdotal success ratings. It was initially supported by FEMA, later by the County, and by Kaiser Permanente Northern California Community Benefit.

In addition to the role of meeting immediate individual needs such as safety and shelter, local governments were tasked with leading infrastructure recovery. After the conclusion of firefighting efforts, the sheer scale of structure assessment and categorization (i.e. establishing state of damage, condemning, or giving all clear for right of entry) and debris removal was astounding. Planning, Building & Environmental Services in Napa assessed about 1,500 structures in under two weeks. Debris removal was such a task that it took approximately one year and the support of the Army Corps of Engineers, since the job was unusually complex for the California Office of Emergency Services (OES) and FEMA. Approximately 175 tons of debris were removed safely. According to the Director of Permits Sonoma, the clean-up task was about ten times that of the task in Napa. It followed a similar trajectory, but included enlistment not only of the Army Corps of Engineers, but also some private corporations. Private contractors did not adhere to all sorting requirements and thus, concrete and other materials ended up in landfills that need not have. Lessons were learned and implemented in debris removal following subsequent floods. All of this unique labor was the precursor to beginning a rebuild effort.

The County leaders who were interviewed about their fire experience often spoke of the rebuild effort as a major success, as well as a challenge. Considering the scale of the fire damage, the under-insurance of many, and the often prohibitive costs of construction, it is certainly fair to point out successes. A lot has been done since 2018. In Napa, according to the Director of Planning, Building, & Environmental Services, 650 homes – a quantity equivalent to 10 years of average building – were lost in the wildfires. In August 2019, 20 had been rebuilt and 180 were in construction. Accomplishing almost a third of a 10 year job in 1 year is something to be proud of. That aid, the hope and public expectation is that all those who lost
homes would be able to rebuild in the short-term. The barriers and challenges that individuals, the Counties, and builders face are discussed in the challenges section that follows. Facing a situation in which a much larger number of homes were damaged and fully destroyed (approx. 5,300, and 1,949 parcels with destroyed structures, respectively), Sonoma County has also made incredible progress in the rebuild effort. Of 1,949 parcels with lost homes, 1,109 or 57% have “rebuild activity”. 62.5% are in the construction process.

In both counties, efforts have been made to remove barriers to rebuild, including relaxing certain regulation, reducing permitting fees, and advocating to enact retroactive insurance reforms. That said, in Sonoma, only 20% of homes have been rebuilt. In Napa, 20 of 650 is only 3% rebuilt. What this indicates is that initiating the permitting process does not equate to holding a permit, and holding a permit does not equate to rebuilding. The permitting process and rebuild process are still lengthy, and sometimes impossible for owners. The difficult side of the rebuild is discussed in the Challenges section.

Finally, numerous local Sonoma County leaders qualify the improvement of the existing Department of Emergency Management and the development of the Office of Recovery and Resilency (ORR) and its Recovery and Resiliency Framework as major successes. In the face of some challenges in immediate ability to respond effectively, the County made investments in these agencies to take the lead. In the case of the Department of Emergency Management, investments were made to expand staff leadership, moving Manager to Director level, and to create additional roles that would enhance inter-agency and community communication. Improvements were made to the Warning System, “SoCoAlert” and efforts were and are being made to engage users in this new system. The ORR maintains a focus on resilience and preparedness on the City and County level. The Framework, which focuses on the following five key strategies, was the product of collaborative research and development.

- Community preparedness and infrastructure
- Housing
- Economy
- Safety Net Services
- Natural Resources

In terms of successes in resilience, most agencies consider that planning and preparedness are key to resilience and point to their work in planning. Tactical planning is certainly one aspect of disaster resilience. Enhancing a community’s ability to respond to and recover from adversity with readily available resources is another. The Public Health efforts to improve communities’ ability to cope emotionally and psychologically are a good example of this sort of resilience.

This represents a selection of successes, but there are certainly more. The following section will explore challenges identified in interviews.

**Challenges**

Despite the incredible outreach to individuals through EOCs and LACs to fulfill their immediate relief and some recovery needs, there were groups left out. One group that was identified by most interviewees were Spanish speaking immigrants (documented and undocumented
The barriers to access for these individuals included 1) fear (of mistreatment and/or deportation) by accessing services at sites guarded by Federal employees or those who looked like a Federal employee, and 2) lack of spoken and/or written information in Spanish. There have been changes made by many agencies, including enhanced collaboration with CBOs that are trusted and used by this population to remedy the fear of accessing services, and the addition of high-quality Spanish translation in real-time and of printed materials to reach Spanish speakers with key information. According to the Sonoma Department of Human Services, not all Spanish materials have been revised, and may not have been translated in a way that all Spanish speakers can understand. In order for the materials to be effective, revision and quality needs to be addressed County-wide.

In terms of the recovery period, housing is a major challenge. There are efforts to reduce the costs of reconstruction through relaxation of certain regulations\(^\text{20}\), reduction of permitting costs, and some insurance reform advocacy. That said, some other costs of reconstruction are much harder to move the needle on. Many, if not all, local government, CBO, and philanthropic leaders would agree that affordable housing was an issue in Napa and Sonoma prior to the 2017 wildfires, and that the fires greatly exacerbated the problem. The cost of rebuilding is exorbitant, with the cost of square footage nearly doubling due to high materials and labor costs. Additionally, many individuals who lost homes do not have sufficient insurance.

According to the Director of Planning, Building, and Environmental Services in Napa, about 40-50% of individuals do not have enough insurance to rebuild. The issue is worse is Sonoma. There are efforts to address these costs in a number of ways. One example is to move those who are underemployed or those displaced by the fires into the rebuild workforce to provide an income stimulus to those households as well as provide needed labor for the rebuild. It is a long-term challenge to address.

Another challenge for the county is similar to what is likely experienced by CBO leaders and staff – burnout and fatigue. Disaster relief and recovery is hard work, and it was added on top of the usual difficult responsibilities. One leader indicated that initially, they were fueled by “organizing something new, helping those in need, but it was also exhausting to be putting in 12 to 16 hour days”.

Additionally, several local government leaders indicated the challenge of budget constraints. In particular, a County Public Health leader shared, “at the state level, it’s an ongoing challenge to fund public health. But our governor just created a new position of Surgeon General who is a great champion of upstream investment”. Generally, this has not been a time of investment or growth for the Counties, which means that much of the needed staff and support for programs is coming slowly and uncertainly.

Finally, a challenge, and maybe better, an opportunity for local government agencies is the implementation and assessment of the ORR Recovery and Resiliency Framework.

Evaluation
As with CBOs and Funders, evaluation was not a consistent requirement or activity among all local government agencies. Those agencies that did participate in evaluation described their methods as mostly informal, including some satisfaction surveys around programs. More substantial evaluation included after action review and internal evaluations. Interviews indicate a comparably slightly more robust requirement for evaluation in the Public Health sector. The reasons given for a less than rigorous or consistent evaluation practice were a lack of time, capacity, and/or culture. That said, every leader expressed a desire for improved evaluation, monitoring, and learning.

Equity
The Public Health and Human Services agencies represented in this report largely have a mandate to serve underserved or vulnerable populations. Despite this mandate, multiple interviewees indicated that vulnerable individuals were unintentionally left out of relief and some recovery efforts. One group, as indicated in the previous “Challenges” section was the Spanish speaking population. The efforts to better reach this group were primarily outsourced to CBOs. The Sonoma Department of Human Services indicated that it funds CBOs with about $15 to 20 M a year, including 2-1-1, La Luz, Catholic Charities, and others. Together, the goal is to overcome fear and get these individuals services. However, beyond that, the goal could also be to advocate for systems change that empower and enable these individuals to move beyond a state of vulnerability. Another aspect of vulnerability identified by a leader within one of the counties’ Public Health agencies was within the affluent Fountain Grove community. According to this leader, because individuals in this community had not used services before, did not know how to organize on their own, were used to being in more control of their lives, and were often older in age, they were extremely vulnerable. The suicide risk and vulnerability in this area were real, but because it is a rich neighborhood, the focus went elsewhere. Other vulnerable groups identified are renters who did not lose their homes to fire but were displaced by landlords who increased rents and/or moved back into their apartments or homes, and those who are underinsured.

Equity and vulnerability in post-disaster contexts are not simple or straightforward. It is important for all philanthropic, CBO, and local government leaders to engage with the different sorts of vulnerability, whether created by longstanding systems that have created socio-economic inequalities and are exacerbated by disaster\textsuperscript{21}, or by disaster that exposes vulnerabilities in groups where social capital and community resilience is lower than expected.\textsuperscript{22}

Partnerships & Collaboration
Interviewees indicated a good amount of collaboration between agencies, and CBOs, and support from some funders in the relief and recovery response.

As city and county agencies came together to operate EOCs and LACs as emergency workers they were certainly united around the same relief and recovery mandate. The successful


collaborative efforts at the EOC were cited as a main success by the Director of Permits Sonoma. It is not as clear that agencies collaborate around resilience. In fact, the inter-agency perception of the ORR is not clear. One interviewee described the ORR as “a coordinating body and a grants clearinghouse that will probably begin to wind down”, when in fact the mandate and role seems to be an ongoing one. Another interviewee expressed doubt about the likelihood that the implementation of the Recovery & Resiliency Framework would be assessed. In other words, the Framework was produced, but implementation might be lacking and the ORR might not be held accountable to fulfillment of the resilience goals. These comments were not negative, but instead seem to reflect some inter-agency confusion about the role of ORR and realism about the county’s tendency to shy away from rigorous evaluation.

County leaders absolutely referenced numerous occasions in which they collaborated with CBOs and funders to fill gaps and/or strengthen the response efforts. Some examples include those in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Agency</th>
<th>CBO Partner</th>
<th>Funding Partner</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Napa Department of Planning, Building, and Environmental Services</td>
<td>Labor groups</td>
<td>Napa Community Foundation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Napa Department of Public Health</td>
<td>Multiple CBOs at EOC (unidentified)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonoma Department of Public Health</td>
<td>Santa Rosa Community Health Centers, Restorative Resources, Latino Health, CA Leadership Academy</td>
<td>Tipping Point Foundation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonoma Department of Human Services</td>
<td>Red Cross, Community Action Partnership (CAP)</td>
<td>Sonoma Community Foundation, UWWC, Healthcare Foundation of Northern Sonoma County, Hewlett Foundation</td>
<td>Internal (between 4 divisions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permits Sonoma</td>
<td>2–1–1, North Bay Organizing Project</td>
<td>UWWC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonoma Dept. of Health, Behavioral Health</td>
<td>Community Dev. Commission., Good Will, West County Comm. Services, Petaluma People Services, Council on Aging, Jewish Fam Services, NAMI</td>
<td>Undocufund</td>
<td>ROC Sonoma, COAD group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonoma County Office of Recovery and Resiliency</td>
<td>2–1–1 SoCo Rises</td>
<td>Community Foundation of Sonoma County, Tipping Point, Hewlett-Packard Company, UWWC, Rebuild North Bay</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management</td>
<td>COAD</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

This is only a sample of partnership or collaborative engagement. There are certainly others.
Interviewees indicated benefits from collaboration such as increased effectiveness, being able to identify and resolve problems within the community, and the ability to fill gaps. However, barriers such as capacity and competition were also identified.

Planning & Prevention

Local government leaders certainly have the desire and have made efforts to plan for next time. Many interviewees pointed to changes already made as a response to learnings from challenges in relief and recovery. For example, many tactical improvements have been made (i.e. related to evacuation routes, communication systems, information). Internal planning (COO) and training (disaster worker training) have been carried out in many agencies. Efforts to better reach Spanish speaking individuals in disaster response have been made, including document revision, addition of Spanish speaking staff, and in the case of the Department of Emergency Management, community engagement staff has been working to build and maintain relationships with CBOs.

Multiple county leaders indicated that resilience and preparedness are a new focus within the local government. Two county leaders pointed to the symbolic and tangible awareness-raising and preparatory value of the “Sonoma Ready Day” in September 2019. It was very well attended, with a diverse group of about 4,500 people.

There are many examples that collaborative response strategies are coming into place and percolating, but not everyone knows who the leaders are, what their goals are, and how they aim to achieve them. Questions remain, such as: Who will be tasked with immediate relief and how? What about medium term recovery? And finally, how will agencies work together to rebuild community resilience?

Full Circle: Did Philanthropic Response Help or Hinder?

Private philanthropy had a substantial role in the success of certain projects, especially at a time when certain agencies saw their budgets constrained. Additionally, in the particular case of the ORR, the agency points to partnership and advice from the Sonoma Community Foundation to engage in community outreach and forums to establish strategies for resilience. At this time, after action, it appears that county entities are even more open to engaging with CBOs to provide them with useful community data and to provide individuals and communities with services. There might be particular opportunities for philanthropy to catalyze additional innovative public-nonprofit collaboration in future.

BRIDGING TO THE FUTURE

The aim of this report was to engage widely with cross sector leaders to assess the collective response to the 2017 wildfires in Napa and Sonoma two years into the recovery process, and to offer recommendations on how to bridge to the future. The findings herein aim to reflect the incredible relief, recovery, and resilience work done by each sector, as well as the challenges faced, and from the perspective of these learnings, to point toward potential next steps.
Despite the headway achieved through excellent relief and long-term recovery response, the research indicates that 1) there are needs that fall outside of the standard recovery framework and that 2) disaster planning will be key to future successful response. In order to meet those needs and define that plan, all stakeholders must invite dialogue about topics that sometimes elicit tension and dissention such as vulnerability, equity, and resilience. So how do we start those conversations? How do we reimagine the future?

The section that follows offers seven recommendations on how to imagine a stronger disaster response collaborative for that future.

**7 Steps to a Stronger Regional Disaster Response Collaborative**

1. **Embrace the gaps.**

   The findings in this report, and in multiple pre-existing reports and needs assessments, have identified critical unmet needs created by the 2017 wildfires.

   - **Housing and housing affordability** is frequently identified as the most critical unmet need, and could soon become even more so as Additional Living Expenses (ALEs) expire and run out for many who lost homes.
   - **Mental health**, as many individuals continue to face stressors created and/or exacerbated by the wildfires and need ongoing support for a variety of conditions and concerns.
   - **Personal finances and jobs**, especially for the most socio-economically vulnerable, as many positions have shifted since the fires – either being eliminated, or wages not adjusting to the higher costs in the economy.
   - **Environmental safety** such as water cleanliness and other exposure to fire-born toxins through other means continue to be a concern for some.

   Community leaders must embrace the joint task of fulfilling unmet recovery needs through funding, program alignment, referral and communication. This is the new normal, and a continuation of the response as the effort moves into its recovery and resilience phase.

2. **Consider Collective Impact to facilitate future disaster response and current recovery efforts.**

   The unique collective problem of disaster preparedness and response could benefit from a specific kind of collective solution – the Collective Impact Model. While the model can take
many shapes and forms, the most effective are multi-sectoral and all share five key conditions:

- **A common agenda**, and a shared vision for success
- **Shared measurement framework**, including agreement on helpful data collection and accountability
- **Mutually reinforcing activities**, which requires coordination through a joint plan of action
- **Continuous communication**, which builds trust and transparency
- **Backbone support**, an organization with the staff, resources and skills to help the collective convene, coordinate and communicate

While some of these conditions are in effect currently in Sonoma and Napa, not all of them are in play. Some of the recommendations that follow address the requirements for these conditions.

### Identify a backbone for collaborative preparedness and action

Intentional commitment to investing in a disaster response backbone entity to help strengthen these collective impact conditions could pave the way for a stronger disaster response collaborative. The creation of new government agencies, the deepening of public-community partnerships, the strengthening of Community Organizations Active in Disaster (COADs) and Long Term Recovery Groups (LTRGs) – all of this organizational development can be a foundation for collective impact, but for truly effective collaboration, a backbone entity is a key. A backbone entity does not preclude multiple strategies, networks, efforts or timelines – but it goes a long way in aligning all good effort toward a common agenda.

### Improve collective communication.

There have been dramatic improvements to county-level communication systems relevant to disaster response as a result of the wildfires. In communication across sectors, however, there is still room for improvement to keep the myriad individual organizations, networks, partnerships and coalitions connected and aware of each other’s efforts. Whether regional or county-specific, creating a cross-sector communications hub will bolster all phases of disaster response.

### Create (and share) an equity lens. Discuss and define equity and vulnerability. Prioritize coordination and cooperation when definitions diverge.

One of the findings of this assessment was that equity and vulnerability were critical frameworks that drove planning and strategy – but that many stakeholders have differing definitions on what exactly equity and vulnerability look like.

There are many different opinions on how to address equity and serve vulnerable groups in post-disaster settings. Is equal giving or equal service an effective strategy in a time of grave need, given evidence that indicates that low-income, racial/ethnic, and linguistic minority
groups, fare far worse than others in recovering from disasters? What makes communities vulnerable after a disaster? Some unexpected communities, not traditionally defined as the most vulnerable, lack the social cohesion and capital that provides a foundation of resilience and self-healing. Older adults and those with disabilities are vulnerable. Lower-middle class renters are vulnerable to rising housing costs and find themselves at risk of homelessness. All fire victims are vulnerable to the post-traumatic stress and other behavioral health concerns, especially those who are isolated, without a strong community connection, and who do not know how to access services.

There is no “correct” approach to defining equity and vulnerability. A deep, honest, and inclusive discussion on equity and vulnerability in post-disaster settings could benefit the goal of effective collective action and collaboration.

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**Commit to strategies that include immediate relief, medium term recovery, and foster long-term and ongoing community resilience.**

The literature and much of Napa's and Sonoma's experience indicate that much of the activity and funding go to the initial phases of disaster relief and recovery. After 6 months to a year, many funders, CBOs and government agencies would like to retreat from the extremely difficult, secondary task of disaster relief and recovery. What we know is that long-term recovery and resilience is absolutely crucial to true community wellness. Disaster response strategy must include the three phases: relief, recovery, and resilience.

Community resilience is paramount to disaster response. From the public health perspective, it is “the sustained ability of communities to withstand, adapt to, and recover from adversity.” It is achieved by capacity building, community empowerment, social connectedness and capital creation, improving community health, wellness, and community systems. It is important to focus on the resilience of vulnerable groups, which in disasters, might be expanded.

While community resilience is an important factor to achieve community and population health, it is truly important to disaster response as well. For this reason, it should not only be an on-going investment and activity, but one that is also incorporated into any collective disaster response plan and individual organizational or agency decision-making.

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**Define (and share) success measures.**

Those who have faced a disaster like the wildfires of 2017 know deeply that there are multiple phases of disaster response. There is immediate relief and recovery, and there is also resilience. Not everyone has the exact same definition or the same timeline for each of these phases, but most, if not all, responders know that addressing the needs associated with each phase is crucial to getting a community back on track and thriving. In order to evaluate the success of efforts and initiatives to fulfill those needs, it is important to identify desired outcomes for each phase, to identify methods to measure those outcomes, and to store and communicate them.

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24 https://www.phe.gov/Preparedness/planning/abc/Pages/community-resilience.aspx
Findings from this research indicate that the regional disaster response could be strengthened by the collective definition of disaster relief, recovery, and resilience outcomes. There are rational reasons why evaluation is not always prioritized in disaster response. Tracking process measures or outputs can seem insensitive or impossible in emergency situations due to the chaotic, high-emotion, and all-hands on deck context of disaster relief. Identifying and measuring outcomes can be even more difficult, as those are often only measurable after the delivery of services through surveys and research. However, as this research also indicated, tracking outputs is key to receiving certain forms of state and federal reimbursement. Moreover, tracking outputs and outcomes helps organizations to know when they are having their desired impact and when they need to shift gears. Since disaster response is truly a collective endeavor, the creation of a consensus driven evaluation framework and shared measurement system that could be utilized by the region or county-level communities would make that response more efficient and effective.
APPENDICES

Appendix I – Advisory Committee

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>County</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alissa Abdo</td>
<td>On the Move Bay Area</td>
<td>Napa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dana Codron</td>
<td>St. Joseph Health Hospital</td>
<td>Napa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Schurman</td>
<td>St. Joseph Health Hospital</td>
<td>Sonoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karin Demarest</td>
<td>Sonoma Community Foundation</td>
<td>Sonoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Elder</td>
<td>St. Joseph Health, Community Building Initiative</td>
<td>Sonoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer O’Donnell</td>
<td>United Way Wine Country</td>
<td>Sonoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Tibbetts</td>
<td>St. Vincent de Paul</td>
<td>Sonoma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix II – Funders Survey Respondents

1. Community Foundation Sonoma County
2. CTE Foundation
3. First 5 Sonoma County
4. Health Care Foundation Northern Sonoma County
5. John Jordan Foundation
6. Kaiser Permanente
7. Kimball Foundation and Gilmore Foundation
8. Lutheran Social Services NorCal
9. North Bay Fire Relief Fund
10. Santa Rosa Memorial Hospital
11. Sonoma County Grape Growers Foundation
12. Tipping Point Community Emergency Relief Fund
13. United Way of the Wine Country
14. St. Joseph Health Hospital
Appendix III – All Interviewees

Philanthropic Sector:
Jennifer O’Donnell, EVP Community Benefit, United Way of the Wine Country
Karin Demarest, VP Programs, Community Foundation Sonoma County
Debbie Mason, ED, Health Care Foundation
Alena Wall, Community Benefit Manager, Kaiser Permanente
Christy Pichel, Consultant, Tipping Point Community Foundation
Angie Dillon-Shore, ED, First 5 Sonoma County
Matt Martin, SVP Community & Govt. Relations, Redwood Credit Union
Jennifer Gray Thompson, ED, Rebuild North Bay
Terence P. Mulligan, ED, Napa Valley Community Foundation
Michael Haney, ED, Sonoma County Vintners’ Foundation

Public Sector:
Oscar Chavez, Asst. Dir., Dept. of Human Services, Sonoma Cty.
Jason Carter, Violence Prevention Mgr., Santa Rosa
Tennis Wick, Permit Sonoma Dir., Sonoma Cty.
David Morrison, Dir. Planning, Bldg, & Environ. Services, Napa Cty.
Karen Relucio, Deputy Dir. of HHSA, Public Health, Napa Cty.
Michael Gossman, Deputy County Admin., Office of Recovery and Resiliency, Sonoma Cty.
Wendy Wheelright, Coordinator, Behavioral Health Division, Sonoma Cty.
Ellen Bauer, Dir., Public Health Division, Department of Health, Services, Sonoma Cty.
Christopher Godley, Dir., Dept. of Emergency Management, Sonoma Cty.
Kelly Elder, Healthy Community, Sections Mgr., Public Health Division, Sonoma Cty.

Community Based Organizations:
Alissa Abdo, ED, On the Move
Ana Lugo, Co-Founder, Undocufund. Consultant, Equity First
Anne Reynolds, ED, American Red Cross, California Wildfire Recovery Program
Celeste Giunta, ED, Napa Valley COAD
Jack Tibbetts, ED, St. Vincent de Paul

Collaborative and/or External:
Adam Peacocke, Co-Chair, ROC Sonoma County
Michael Kleeman, Consultant, ARC, Disaster Planning and Response, UC San Diego

Hospital System:
Daniel Schurman, Community Health Investment Manager, St. Joseph Health, Sonoma County
Andrea Garfia, Community Health Coordinator, Sutter Health Hospital, Santa Rosa
<table>
<thead>
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<th>CBO Name</th>
<th>CBO Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Abode Services</td>
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<td>Buckelew Programs</td>
<td>Napa Valley Coad</td>
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<td>Burbank Housing</td>
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<td>On the Move</td>
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<td>Catholic Charities</td>
<td>Operation Access</td>
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<td>Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Santa Rosa</td>
<td>Parents CAN</td>
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<td>Center for Well Being</td>
<td>Petaluma Health Center</td>
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<td>Ceres Community Project</td>
<td>Puertas Abiertas</td>
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<td>Committee on the Shelterless</td>
<td>Reach for Home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Action Napa Valley</td>
<td>Redwood Empire Food Bank</td>
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<td>Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County</td>
<td>Santa Rosa Community Health</td>
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<td>Community Child Care Council of Sonoma County (4Cs)</td>
<td>Share the Care</td>
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<td>Community Support Network (CSN)</td>
<td>Social Advocates for Youth</td>
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<td>Cope Family Center</td>
<td>Solano-Napa Habitat for Humanity</td>
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<td>Council on Aging</td>
<td>Sonoma County Legal Aid</td>
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<td>Hands Across the Valley</td>
<td>Sonoma County ROC</td>
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<td>Hanna Institute</td>
<td>Sonoma Ecology Center</td>
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<td>If Given a Chance</td>
<td>St. Vincent de Paul - Sonoma</td>
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<td>Interfaith Shelter Network</td>
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<td>La Luz</td>
<td>The Table</td>
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<td>Land Paths</td>
<td>United Policy Holders</td>
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<td>Latin Health Project</td>
<td>UpValley Family Centers</td>
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<td>Mentis</td>
<td>West County Community Services</td>
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<td>Molly’s Angels</td>
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<td>NAMI Sonoma County</td>
<td>YWCA of Sonoma County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Napa County Disaster Recovery Group</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix V – Secondary Sources


3. CEP Advisory Services, Community Foundation Sonoma County and Napa Valley Community Foundation, March 2018, “2018 Wildfire Response Survey”.

4. Center for Disaster Philanthropy, “The Disaster Philanthropy Playbook Tip Sheet”.


11. Jessie Ball Dupont Fund, “Creating Order from Chaos”.


16. King Brown Partners on behalf of SoCo Rises, April 30, 2018, “Sonoma County Community Outreach Survey”.


