



COMMUNITY FOUNDATION of Southeastern Massachusetts

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The Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts to Establish a Southcoast Emergency Response Fund

NEW BEDFORD — In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts is embarked on two critical initiatives.

A Southcoast Emergency Response Fund has been established to rapidly raise the much-needed funds that will then be deployed to organizations in our region that are disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The initial grants from the Fund will be made to those organizations serving our most vulnerable populations: elderly, homeless, food insecure, and you. For the Fund to be successful we are appealing to our community – businesses and individuals - and to foundations local and outside of our region for support. For more information and ways to contribute, please visit <https://www.cfsema.org/>.

If you are an individual who has been affected by COVID-19, The Community Foundation is proud to be partnering with the United Ways of Greater New Bedford and Fall River, both are able to directly support individuals and their families adversely affected by this pandemic. For more information for United Way New Bedford, please visit <https://unitedwayofgnb.org/> and for more information for United Way Fall River please visit <https://uwgfr.org/>. For a list of resources, please connect online to <https://mass211.org/> or dial 2-1-1 on any phone.

The Fund's initial focus is to prioritize those areas of impact that will not likely receive governmental support, help those who are most severely affected, and those serving our most vulnerable neighbors during the COVID-19 pandemic. One-time operating grants will also be awarded on a rolling basis to nonprofits whose operations in arts & culture, education and economic opportunity have been stressed by the outbreak. The first phase of these rapid-response grants will provide flexible support to 501 (c)3 organizations:

- Support the ability for organizations in need to continue to work remotely to provide support remotely
- Responding to increased demand for basic needs and health support
- Providing outreach to vulnerable populations
- Addressing fear and confusion about the outbreak among the region's most vulnerable residents

The second initiative by the Community Foundation is to create an opportunity for our local non-profits to stay connected and share their best practices. This effort is in recognition of the truly amazing and effective non-profits that our region has and the need for that community to continue to come together. Each Friday, the Community Foundation will host a Meet Me for Coffee, a virtual chatroom to support this need. Last Friday, the Community Foundation hosted nearly 80 participants in the call and we look forward to continuing this for the foreseeable future. If you are a regional nonprofit leader interested in joining the conversation, please email our staff kheard@cfsema.org for more information.

“Our community relies on its Community Foundation to mobilize philanthropy and to support our local non-profits – this crisis for which we have no precedent demands that we respond in a way befitting our region,” said Linda Bodenmann, Chair of the Community Foundation Board of Directors.

John Vasconcellos, President of the Community Foundation added, “Over the past two weeks we have been in robust communication with a wide range of local non-profits and have a strong sense of the need that this Fund can help to full. And we are partnering with the local United Ways and other foundations in order to be sure that our collective impact is as strong as it can be. Local philanthropic leadership in response to this pandemic is critical and we are eager to do our part.”

For general questions and inquiries about the Fund, please direct your inquiry to emergencyfund@cfsema.org. If you would like to make a donation, please contact the Community Foundation’s Development Manager, Tricia at pgrime@cfsema.org. Lastly, for media inquiries and interview requests, please contact Jasmyn Baird at jbaird@cfsema.org.

About the Community Foundation

Our Community. Your Foundation. Since 1995, area residents have been turning to the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts to make their philanthropic giving as effective as possible. The Community Foundation is a public charity serving thousands of people who share a common concern – improving the quality of life in Southeastern Massachusetts. To date, the Community Foundation has distributed over \$25 million from over 175 funds to humanitarian, educational and cultural organizations in the region. More information about the Foundation can be found at www.cfsema.org.

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