

Disaster Recovery Fund Frequently Asked Questions (4/2024)

Why was the Disaster Recovery Fund created?

When a disaster happens, our community wants to help. The Disaster Recovery Fund was created to provide a collaborative option for donors to help address both immediate and long-term unmet needs that will arise during times of disaster. The intention of the DRF is to provide a nimble philanthropic fund for Greater Des Moines in the face of uncertainty caused by disaster. It was created to supplement, not replace, existing resources and services provided by nonprofits and local, state and federal agencies. Each disaster is unique and unanticipated needs will arise. This fund is intended to be flexible and responsive in meeting needs that are not otherwise covered by existing programs.

Who created the fund?

Community organizations came together to explore a coordinated way to support our community in the face of disaster. Led by a core group of organizations- the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, United Way of Central Iowa, Polk County Emergency Management Agency, American Red Cross- Central Iowa Chapter, IMPACT, Polk County and Community Family and Youth Services- Polk County- a series of community conversations were held with nonprofit organizations and other service providers in late 2019 to lay the groundwork for unforeseen challenges.

What is the purpose of the fund?

The Disaster Recovery Fund (DRF) will provide grants focused on ***reducing the economic and health impacts on vulnerable populations*** prior to and following a disaster as well as long-term needs that may emerge. Grants awarded will supplement, not replace, other resources including government support and relief efforts in cases of local disaster. Grants will fill gaps in services and needs that are not being met by existing nonprofit, local, state and federal resources and programs.

How long will the fund be available/open?

The DRF extends beyond a single disaster and is a key part of the community's coordinated disaster response. Preparedness work will be continuous and ongoing. The fund is activated in times of local disaster as recommended by local Emergency Management authorities. It was first activated in 2020 as part of the community's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and again in 2024 as part of the response to severe storms and tornadoes.

How do you know what is the most important thing to support?

Every disaster can look different, with different impacts, different needs and different resources available for support. A team of community leaders and grantmakers will work together to identify recipients with deep roots in the community and experience to deliver support and services to vulnerable populations at moments of crisis. The funds will be used to support needs that are not being met through existing nonprofit, local, state and federal resources and programs.

Who is giving oversight to the fund?

The Disaster Recovery Fund is implemented by the DRF Activation & Coordination Team including representatives of: the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines, United Way of Central Iowa, Polk County Emergency Management, American Red Cross- Central Iowa Chapter, Polk County Board of Supervisors, Community Family and Youth Services and IMPACT. A DRF Grantmaking Committee will also be utilized. The fund is held at the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines on behalf of the community.

How is money going to be given away?

Grants will provide flexible funding to trusted partners for support such as client assistance and/or organization capacity needs due to demands of the disaster. The DRF Activation & Coordination Team will convene a DRF Grantmaking Committee for each specific disaster to oversee the process. Grants from the DRF may be awarded on a rolling basis as the Committee continues to assess the evolution of a disaster and community needs. Grants will be provided to community-based organizations/service providers active in current response and/or preparation in the areas of economic and health impacts for vulnerable populations. Grants will be made only to cover needs that are not being met by existing nonprofit, local, state and federal resources and programs.

Is there a fee to contribute?

As we make supporting our most vulnerable populations the top priority in unprecedented times, there is no administrative fee for participating in the fund. The Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines is covering the cost of the staff leading and facilitating this effort. In addition, donors making a credit card contribution have the opportunity to increase their gift amount to cover the credit card processing fee.

Can individuals access the money for things they need like supplies, food, etc.?

Individuals are encouraged to direct questions to 2-1-1 to be connected with community resources. The DRF will support nonprofit organizations that provide services intended to reduce the economic and health impacts on vulnerable populations prior to and following a disaster.

How can I give?

Donations can be made online at www.desmoinesfoundation.org/disasterfund.

Checks can be mailed to: Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines

c/oDisaster Recovery Fund

1915 Grand Ave.

Des Moines, IA 50309

If you are interested in supporting the Disaster Recover Fund through another asset type, such as a gift of stock, contact the Community Foundation at 515-447-4203.

How can I learn more about the fund?

Visit www.desmoinesfoundation.org/disasterfund or contact the Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines at 515-883-2626.