

Disaster Recovery Fund Frequently Asked Questions

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 non-profits 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?

Over the past several months, community organizations have come 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 such as this.

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 non-profit, 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.

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 non-profit, 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?

Initial grants will be awarded outside of an application process to provide flexible support to trusted partners quickly and will be provided for direct 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 COVID-19 to oversee the process. Grants from the DRF may be awarded on a rolling basis as the Committee continues to assess the evolution of the 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 non-profit, 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 this unprecedented time, 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.

How do nonprofits apply for support from the Disaster Recovery Fund?

Initial grants will be awarded outside of an application process to provide flexible support to trusted partners quickly and will be provided for direct client assistance and/or organization capacity needs due to demands of the disaster. The Disaster Recovery Coordination Team has created <https://www.211updates.org/> so that nonprofits can submit program and service updates in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. On this site nonprofits can also complete a survey to share the challenges they are facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic as we seek to develop a comprehensive picture of the effects on the sector.

If there are contributions remaining in the Disaster Recovery Fund after the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, how will they be used?

Funds that remain after the COVID-19 pandemic will remain in the Disaster Recovery Fund at the Community Foundation and will be used to address unmet needs in subsequent disasters. Long-term recovery work in our community will be ongoing and it is the intent that this fund continues to grow and serve as a source that can be activated quickly in the face of whatever the next disaster may be.

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

Individuals are encouraged to direct their 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/o Disaster 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.