



W O R K I N G T O G E T H E R F O R O U R C O M M U N I T Y

Referral Response Update to *Board Referral No. 2023.04* seeking Storm Recovery Rent Subsidy Program for Farmworkers.

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Background



The original planning for this subsidy program was done in response to the recovery from the atmospheric river events which occurred at the beginning of 2023. The plan was to create a targeted program for the most vulnerable and in need farmworkers negatively impacted by the January storms who do not have access to other forms of State and Federal disaster recovery assistance programs. The assistance was based on the needs identified as a result of the January weather disaster which primarily impacted farmworkers and agricultural businesses.

However, while the recovery efforts were underway for the January disaster, the March atmospheric river weather events occurred, thereby, evolving the needs assessment. In addition to the March emergency event further impacting farm working families, County low-income hospitality and small business households were impacted.

Since the time the pilot program was considered by the Board, Monterey County was included in a Federal Disaster Declaration followed by the Department of Social Services connecting with state and federal representatives to plan and implement various forms of disaster assistance now becoming available to impacted residents.

Assistance Available

Individual Assistance (IA) through FEMA, which includes rental assistance.

USDA COVID Benefit is now available to impacted farmworkers.

Disaster CalFresh Benefits available to all regardless of documentation status.

Disaster Case Management.

California Department of Social Services Rapid Response Funds.

Supports from Community Based Organizations.

Catholic Charities Disaster Relief



The 2023 winter and spring storms left a trail of destruction—flooded homes, businesses, and farmlands— and lost wages for many workers.

Catholic Charities is collaborating with local nonprofits and government agencies to provide disaster relief in Santa Cruz, Monterey, and San Benito counties.

We are focusing our efforts on the underserved areas where the storms had the highest impact—**Santa Cruz Mountains, Watsonville, Pajaro, South Monterey County, and Hollister.**

Our disaster relief efforts are provided in two phases:

Phase I: **Short-term disaster relief** – (1 to 2 months after disaster impacts)

Phase II: **Long-term recovery and case management** – (2 to 3 years)

Short-term assistance:

During the first 1-2 months after the disaster happens, we conduct **need assessments** and provide **limited financial assistance** to cover basic necessities such as rent, food, gas, and clothes.

Long-term recovery and case management:

Since 2020, Catholic Charities has been at the forefront of **helping survivors of local disasters**, starting with the wildfires that ravaged the Santa Cruz Mountains to the current 2023 atmospheric river storms that affected numerous Central Coast communities.

Our **Disaster Relief staff supports the most vulnerable survivors for 2-3 years** on their complex road to recovery. Using a trauma informed lens and strength-based approach our **disaster case management team**, assesses survivor's needs, supports their individualized recovery plan, and helps navigating FEMA application/benefits, as well as additional resources, so that people can regain their stability and return to safe, sanitary, and secure housing.

We are honored to **partner** with local non-profits, parishes, and county, as well as local, State and Federal government to leverage and coordinate resources to assist storm survivors and advocate for local services.

Proposed Project

Execute a contract with Catholic Charities to provide \$180,000 in rental assistance support. Catholic Charities will layer this support into their current disaster relief efforts, reducing administrative costs to 10%, or \$18,000.

Execute a contact amendment to the current contract with the United Way to provide \$180,000 in rental assistance support.

The proposed rental assistance funding for impacted low-income farm labor, hospitality and small business workers in the amount of \$800 to \$1,200 per month, based upon need, and capped at \$2,400 would be made available per eligible household. A total funding amount of \$360,000 for direct assistance will serve a minimum of 150 households. Total cost of providing this assistance is \$378,000, including the \$18,000 administrative expense.

Assistance available to households who do not qualify for any other form of Federal or State rental assistance benefits.

Direction and Next Steps

Adopt a resolution to:

Provide direction for implementing a rental subsidy program for farm workers and others affected by the winter storms who are not eligible for other State and Federal rental assistance programs;

Authorize and direct the Auditor-Controller to amend the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Adopted Budget by increasing appropriations by \$378,000 to provide a rent subsidy program for farmworkers for Social Services Community Program Fund 001-50IO-SOC004-8258, financed by a decrease in appropriations in General Fund contingencies 001-I050-CA0020 (4/5ths Vote);

Authorize the Department of Social Services Director or Assistant Director to negotiate and execute a Contract with Catholic Charities for \$198,000 to provide a rent subsidy program for farmworkers and others for the period upon execution through June 30, 2023; and

Authorize the Department of Social Services Director or Assistant Director to negotiate and execute Contract Amendment #5 with the United Way of Monterey County to provide a rent subsidy program for farmworkers and others adding \$180,000 for a revised contract total of \$52,599,682.