

# COVID-19 EMERGENCY RESPONSE FUND



The COVID-19 Pandemic is an unprecedented public health and economic crisis, the impact of which has yet to be fully realized. Although all American communities will be hit hard, the nation's most vulnerable communities are poised to suffer most. Fresno, and its surrounding communities in the Central San Joaquin Valley, comprise a major metropolitan statistical area of over a million residents, which already boasts among the most severe poverty in America. Sometimes sadly referred to as the "Appalachia of California," the region, with its many assets, is nevertheless poorly equipped to suffer a catastrophe of size and magnitude it now faces.

If it were a state, the San Joaquin Valley would lead the nation in the percentage (19.9%) of the population below the Federal Poverty Level. More than 90% of families in Fresno Unified qualify for Title I, the nation's free lunch program. Food insecurity is prevalent, and with school closures the region's children face a potential crisis. The economy has never fully recovered from the last major recession of 2008-2009. While the agriculture-based economy is strong, the Valley has an otherwise weak and undiversified economic base to sustain it, or to intervene philanthropically when a crisis hits.

Being so close to the Bay Area and Los Angeles, the region will be inevitably impacted hard by the spread of the virus. Before the State's stay-at-home order, Fresno and other communities had already begun taking prophylactic measures to close restaurants, bars, social venues and other gathering places. This disruption, as across the country, is severe. But unlike other communities, the Valley is woefully unequipped and unendowed to sustain this crisis. Help, from within our own community and from others, is urgently needed.

The Central Valley Community Foundation is dedicated to effective philanthropy that strengthens the communities we serve. Our job is to assemble and deploy the resources needed for the Central San Joaquin Valley to confront and solve its greatest challenges.

The coronavirus has arrived in California and our Valley at a time when the area's civic leaders were already organizing to overcome the devastating impact of generations of chronic distress. Very quickly, the pandemic has exacerbated that distress and illuminated the urgent and critical needs of the people who make their home in the Central San Joaquin Valley. As our crisis response gears up, the acuteness of the pandemic is creating new opportunities for swift action and productive collaboration.

At CVCF, our approach to crisis response has been informed by:

- A dedicated and dynamic staff team with extensive experience in public policy, economic development, and community development who are dedicated to the transformation of the greater Fresno region.
- An online survey of front-line community-based organizations to determine the most pressing needs for vulnerable populations throughout the pandemic's early stages.
- An ongoing feedback loop through proactive and ongoing outreach to key system leaders.

PHASE ONE of our response is anchored by the establishment of the [COVID-19 Emergency Response Fund at CVCF](#). The fund is open to both institutional funding partners as well as

charitable contributions from private citizens. Funds raised will support:

- Consistent, comprehensive, culturally congruent communication through previously under-resourced channels such as the 2-1-1 Information and Referral Helpline in counties we serve.
- Childcare for healthcare workers who are system-critical for lifesaving care, but who are facing the multiple burdens of (a) unprecedented workloads, (b) possible exposure to illness, and (c) their own children out of school.
- Food availability and distribution to those most vulnerable to hunger, the virus, or both.

PHASE TWO of our response will be directed at protecting the health of the economy from the side effects of long-term countermeasures against the spread of the virus. We know our small business and nonprofit partners are deeply impacted by the shortage of customers, donors, and volunteers. We will seek to extend financial assistance to families, individuals and organizations affected by the pandemic, and expand critical support for front-line social service agencies providing help to the poor and affected. More information will follow as our work turns to this phase.

# The San Joaquin Valley Will Be Disproportionately Impacted by COVID-19



	<b>Socioeconomic Health: Chronic Conditions</b>	<b>Acute Impact of Pandemic and Economic Recession</b>
High Poverty	<p>If it were a state, the San Joaquin Valley would lead the nation in the percentage (19.9%) of the population below the Federal Poverty Level.</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau</a></p>	<p>Layoffs and reductions from the economic shutdown are impacting the most vulnerable shift workers first.</p>
No Wealth to Fall Back On	<p>Approx. 45% of Fresno households lack liquid savings to cover three months of basic expenses. That's the highest rate among large California cities, and far above averages of 31% statewide and 35% nationally.</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">Prosperity Now Scorecard</a></p>	
Low Wages Don't Pay the Rent	<p>To afford the average asking rent requires a household income of \$40k. More than 42% of Fresno households fall short. The lowest-income households spend 73% of their income on rent.</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">California Housing Partnership Corporation</a></p>	<p>A drop of even a few hundred dollars in expected monthly pay may make it impossible for a significant portion of Fresno residents to pay the rent.</p>
Inadequate Housing Supply	<p>Among the nation's 75 largest cities, Fresno has the nation's lowest rental vacancy rate, 1.8% in 2018 (compared to an average of 6.7%). Fresno also led in 2017 at 3.1%.</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey/ Housing Vacancy Survey, April 4, 2019</a></p>	<p>For residents who can't pay the rent, landlords won't hesitate to evict knowing other families are scrounging for housing.</p>
Segregated Poverty by Neighborhood	<p>Fresno has the highest concentrated poverty rate (42.2%) of any metro area in the country. While the economy grew from 2009 to 2018, the poorest neighborhoods in Fresno got poorer (rising from 43.1% to 45.4% in poverty).</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">USA Today</a> and <a href="#">The Brookings Institution</a></p>	<p>The most economically vulnerable and food-insecure households are clustered geographically. Their breadwinners have the least transferable skills, and are disproportionately people of color.</p>
Place-Based Poverty Traps	<p>Over 350,000 live in the 70% of Fresno that is a "low-opportunity neighborhood," where children born into poverty have a diminished probability of reaching the middle class.</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">Opportunity Insights</a></p>	<p>When basic services and support systems go down, these families lose first and most.</p>
Racial Exclusion from Opportunity	<p>Historically in Fresno, the unemployment rate for Blacks is 22.3%, compared to 8.9% for Whites, ranking Fresno among the worst cities for Black Americans.</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">24/7 Wall Street</a></p>	
Not Enough Doctors	<p>The San Joaquin Valley has 45 physicians per 100,000 residents, compared to 75 in the Bay Area.</p> <p>Source: <a href="#">California Senate Select Committee on the Social Determinants of Children's Well-Being</a></p>	<p>The coronavirus pandemic has hit health professionals hardest as they care for both record patient loads and the needs of their own families.</p>

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Poor Opportunities for Kids	Fresno has the second-lowest Child Opportunity Score among the nation's 100 largest cities.  <i>Source: <a href="https://diversitydatakids.org">DiversityDataKids.org</a></i>	Mandatory closures of Head Start facilities and schools have shut the youngest children off from nourishment just when their developing brains need it the most.
Limited Early Care & Education (ECE)	Only 24% of 3-year-olds have access to early care in a licensed facility. Fresno County needs an additional 46,766 ECE seats to serve its young population.  <i>Source: <a href="#">Fresno DRIVE Draft Investment Plan</a></i>	
Food Insecurity	Fresno County has California's third-highest rate (26.2%) of children living in food-insecure households.  <i>Source: <a href="#">Feeding America</a></i>	
High Unemployment	Among metro areas with over 500,000 population, Fresno has the third-highest unemployment rate (6.9% in Dec. 2019).  <i>Source: <a href="#">Bureau of Labor Statistics</a></i>	In past recessions, unemployment has surged past 30% in some parts of the Valley.
Fundamentally Weak Export Economy	Fresno's economy is 29% exportable, compared to the U.S. average of 51%. Compared to peer cities in California, Fresno has 1/7th the patent activity and 1/30th the R&D funding per capita.  <i>Source: <a href="#">Fresno DRIVE Draft Investment Plan</a></i>	As in other regions, greater exports would help the Valley better weather recessions by diversifying the consumer base beyond the local market.
Disinvestment in Public Space	Fresno's park system ranks 92nd among the nation's 100 largest cities.  <i>Source: <a href="#">Trust for Public Land</a></i>	Families in Fresno's poorest neighborhoods have the least developed and least healthy places to take kids out of the house while maintaining social distancing.
Environmental Injustice	South Fresno's State Assembly district has the most low-income, highly polluted neighborhoods in California — double its closest competitor. 38% of Fresno residents live in census tracts that are above the 90th percentile statewide for economic and environmental burden.  <i>Source: <a href="#">CalEnviroScreen 3.0</a></i>	