Minnesota Disaster Recovery Fund:
Learnings From Collaborative Funding to Support Communities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

April 2021
Introduction

In late January 2020, the first cases of COVID-19 were reported in the United States, and the severe disruption of our collective lives became a real possibility. When communities respond to crisis, whether a natural disaster or a tragic event, timing is of the essence. Resources are gathered and coordinated. Decisions are made quickly and action soon follows. Ideally, this is all made easier by having a prepared plan in place.

But how does a community respond to a slow-moving crisis, one that generates fear and uncertainty? An emergency that starts slowly before spreading its devastation out over the course of months, even years?

For some, a slow-moving crisis means taking a “wait and see” approach. The perception of “extra time” can allow for more information and additional clarity around community needs. It can also lead to indecisiveness, as was evident in the varied initial responses of state and local governments, major employers and institutions to the emergence of COVID-19. Philanthropic organizations also have a tendency to be process oriented, taking the time to identify investments with the greatest impact. All of this makes the response from Minnesota’s philanthropic community stand out.

The speed in which this pooled fund came together is remarkable, as is the way in which organizations at all levels of the process extended themselves. Early conversations held by the Minnesota Council on Foundations (MCF) resulted in quick affirmational decisions to create a response fund that was focused on reaching all populations across Minnesota and fulfilling the needs of communities.

This was soon followed by essential conversations around structure and decision making processes. MCF was stepping into a new role as an intermediary grantmaker, but needed a partner to process the grants. The Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation offered the experience and capacity to distribute funds across the state. Both organizations waived all fees, committing 100 percent of the funds raised to support community recovery.

When it came time to decide how funds would be distributed and what the decision making process would look like, it was clear that local community foundations, the Minnesota Initiative Foundations, and other intermediaries who possessed the knowledge to address specific needs in their communities would play a critical role.

An advisory committee responsible for awarding the grants was established with diversity, equity and inclusion in mind. Corporate philanthropy, private philanthropy, community foundations, state government and nonprofits all had representation on the advisory committee.

On March 16, 2020, just over two weeks after Minnesota’s first case of COVID-19 was reported and a few days removed from the first conversations around establishing a fund, Susie Brown, president...
of MCF, sent a fundraising email to members. Two days later, MCF and the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation publicly announced that $4.4 million had been raised for a coronavirus response and introduced the Minnesota Disaster Recovery Fund (MDRF).

“It takes courage to recognize and call out injustice. But every one of these partners already had exercised that courage. So it wasn’t a new deep breath of courage. It was the same continuing conviction that they already had.”

Eric Jolly, Ph.D., President and CEO of the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation

The following months would see the advisory committee meeting weekly to make critical decisions about the distribution of funds. Civil unrest would erupt across the Twin Cities in the aftermath of George Floyd’s murder at the hands of Minneapolis police, expanding the scope of the crisis and the fund. Later, a single anonymous donation would nearly double the size of the fund and, as the pandemic continued without an end in sight, the question of the appropriate time for relief and the time for recovery in a slow-moving crisis would be raised.

There is a lot to learn from the experiences of those involved in the fund and the impact of their work. In an effort to share those learnings for future collaborative funding efforts, Seiche conducted 21 interviews with MDRF stakeholders — donors, intermediaries and advisory committee members.

Note: The MDRF application process did not require extensive questions or reporting. As a result, quantitative data is limited.

According to Minnesota Compass, the percentage of population per region are: Central - 758,101 (14%); Northland - 324,818 (6%); Northwest - 170,798 (3%); Southern - 739,132 (13%); Southwest - 275,843 (5%); Twin Cities - 3,065,147 (55%); and West Central 229,539 (4%).

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**Total Funding Fundraised and Dispersed by MDRF**

$11,618,980

Average Grant Size: $117,363.43

- Donors: 77
- Intermediaries: 92
- Grants Awarded To Intermediaries: 99

Intermediaries Regranted To:

- 1,700+ Nonprofit Organizations
- 3,000+ Small Businesses

Note: Donors include institutional foundations and donor-advised funds. There were an additional 123 individuals who donated to MDRF.
Meeting Pressing Community Needs Required Minimizing Barriers to an Agile Response.

“People were dying, the stakes shifted. This isn’t normal grantmaking. Businesses are shutting down. No one knows what we’re doing. We don’t know how long it will last. There was so much shift, change and uncertainty all the time, and we all had to embrace that.”

Carrie Jo Short, Senior Director of Community Impact at the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation

As the impact of COVID-19 on social and economic systems continued to evolve, MDRF also shifted and adapted its process in real time.

- Disbursing funds in a timely and appropriate manner was core to the success of MDRF. Applications from intermediaries were reviewed, assessed and approved on a weekly basis during advisory committee meetings. As the longevity and uncertainty of the crisis became more apparent, the pace of funding was slowed, leaving more weeks between application reviews. Over time, informal parameters were developed to guide which intermediaries were recommended and then funded.

- Rather than adapting a pre-existing grantmaking process, MDRF developed a process that was flexible and guided by the principle of efficiency. From the outset, the application was simplified to require minimal documentation and reporting.

  - Intermediaries implemented a similar practice to remove the barrier of a demanding application process – easy online forms and/or trusting community members in their networks to identify who and where funds needed to be distributed.

  - Advisory committee members considered expanding the application to include more questions beyond the general ones that asked about how the money would be spent and which regions an intermediary worked in. However, there was consistent consensus to keep the application easy – questions that require extensive information would have been burdensome and time consuming.

  “We had an online process. It was a form that they could fill out and it took about 10 minutes. Once we had funding, we made the first grants within a week. We just kept going down that list of [childcare] providers that had applied as we got more money.”

  Barb Yates, President of Think Small

- Intermediaries’ capabilities to regrant varied across communities and regions. Some had robust infrastructure while others had limited experience in regranting. However, they expressed gratitude in MDRF’s willingness to let them take on the intermediary role.

  “You can make a pretty big impact with a pretty small amount of money. Some of our applications were for $1,500 and they acted like you’d given them the moon, but it was what they needed at the time.”

  Betty Christensen, Program Developer for Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging
Preparedness, even if limited, and information gathering were essential to guide, adapt and refine the process.

No one had lived through a pandemic before, so the circumstances were new and unpredictable. Decisions were made based on what was known and anticipating the unknowns. There was no right way, but MDRF stakeholders felt that they did the best they could with the knowledge and resources available.

- There were some individuals in the advisory committee with experience in the Philanthropic Preparedness, Resiliency & Emergency Partnership (PPREP), which was supported by Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies, a Minnesota-based organization with a long history and commitment to disaster philanthropy and a MDRF donor. They applied learnings from PPREP — understanding the role of philanthropy in disaster relief, disaster contingency plans, state vs. federal disaster declaration and exploring how disaster impacted marginalized and disadvantaged communities — to inform the overall MDRF process, especially on best practices and ways to structure pooled funding.

- Representatives from the Minnesota Department of Health and Governor’s Office were invited to attend the meetings, convened by the advisory committee, on a consistent basis to share information about where and how COVID-19 was spreading and the movement of state and federal relief funding. As the government funding gained momentum, MDRF was strategic in filling in gaps that the government didn’t fill.

“One of the things that we did really quickly was to get a survey out to nonprofits in our 12 county region – not just nonprofits, but individuals too. I think we had 500 responses within a week and people saying, ‘This is what my needs are. This is what’s happening.’ I was able to share that information with the group.”

Dawn Gange, Senior Development Officer at Northwest Minnesota Foundation

- The transition to telework after the Governor announced stay at home orders in March 2020, while challenging for some, did not stall responsiveness to the needs of the community. MDRF stakeholders who incorporated remote work into their workplaces before the pandemic easily pivoted. Those who needed to learn on the go quickly put together a digital workplace to support their staff, and then worked to improve it in the following months.

Funding supported Minnesota’s diverse communities (including but not limited to):
Asian, Black, Disability Community, Hmong, Indigenous, Immigrant, Islamic, Jewish, Karen, Latino/Latina/Latinx, Lao, LGBTQIA, Native American, People of Color, Sudanese and Undocumented Immigrants.

Note: Roughly 50 percent of grantees mentioned serving Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) either in the description of their project and/or in their report; many acknowledged that they worked with one or more races, diverse communities, etc.

“Normally, there is a lot more process around these things, but I think, as a collective, we said this is not the time to – this is a time to trust each other. Our priority was meeting the needs. Our priority was getting money, the quickest way possible, to those that needed it the most.”

Anne Cullen Miller, President of Catholic Community Foundation of Minnesota
Impact: Healthcare

LOWER SIOUX INDIAN COMMUNITY

Lower Sioux Indian Community (Lower Sioux) received $200,000 from MDRF to help alleviate the economic stress on households and to provide direct cash relief for food and basic needs to tribal members. Additionally, the Lower Sioux tribal citizens operate a small but full-scale clinic. The clinic provides medical, optical, dental and community health care for the Lower Sioux Nation. During the pandemic, the clinic was able to maintain basic health care services while also integrating COVID-19 care and participating actively in Lower Sioux’s Emergency Operations Center. Funding from MDRF helped support pandemic shifts for the clinic including:

- Transitioned the clinic to mostly telehealth visits and limited in-person appointments
- Leadership staff within clinic and community health are actively participating with the Emergency Operations Center
- Integrated COVID-19 testing and now vaccinations
- One temporary staff person hired to assist with vaccinations

In collaboration, Emergency Operations Center (EOC), Lower Sioux Clinic and Community Health staff were actively involved in organizing and distributing emergency food to Lower Sioux families and casino employees, beginning in April 2020.

The lack of clarity about relief and recovery efforts caused confusion.

The assumption that the pandemic would be short-term, similar to natural disasters like floods or tornadoes, placed an emphasis on the importance of recovery to help with resilience and rebuilding. However, it became more evident as MDRF made its first few grant rounds that relief was desperately needed and recovery was not within the foreseeable future.

- Deliberate determination of where funding should be allocated – whether for relief, recovery or nonprofit resilience – was fluid. However, the advisory committee did not firmly establish an approach to follow. While there were conversations at length to differentiate between relief and recovery efforts, MDRF administered significant funding to projects focused on relief because that was prioritized by communities.

- An anonymous $5 million donation to MDRF expanded the fund’s capability to pursue recovery efforts. MDRF did not provide communications that was clear to intermediaries to explain why the fund was shifting its grant criteria from relief to recovery. Prospective intermediaries expressed feeling rushed and unprepared to adjust their applications to the new criteria.

“It was ‘relief’ and then jumped to ‘resiliency.’ It would have been good to receive communications about these things that MDRF was thinking and planning to do.”

Linda Her, Executive Director of Asian American Organizing Project
There was respect and willingness to acknowledge and embrace tensions.

Advisory committee members came from diverse backgrounds, intentions, experiences and voices that reflected their knowledge and expertise of various sectors and the communities they represented. However, honest discussions about group expectations, individual biases and perspectives would have helped manage expectations and strengthen accountability.

- Intermediaries were selected with an equity lens, but decisions about dollar amounts that each organization received were driven by equality. If organizations had similar applications, MDRF exercised fairness and gave the same amount. The pressures to be responsive to community needs, racially and geographically, made it challenging to pause and hold further dialogue for members who wanted to better understand when the process practiced equity versus equality.

- Members often felt they had to bear the responsibility to educate their peers about donor intent and the issues facing the communities they served.

- Members from the nonprofit sector and BIPOC communities expressed that those with decision making power needed to center BIPOC voices who represented the communities that were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

- The intermediary approach was the backbone of MDRF, but there were frustrations about whether or not the intermediary landscape was truly equitable.

- Organizations in Greater Minnesota did not have the same level of staffing and capacity as those in the metro area to function as intermediaries. The level of statewide work that intermediaries indicated was not equal. It was easy for intermediaries to claim statewide engagement, but then only work in one Greater Minnesota city while the majority of their work was focused in the Twin Cities. After the first round, MDRF included a question about regions, based on the Minnesota Initiative Foundation regions, into the application.

“We didn’t invest in relationship building upfront as much as we could have or should have. As we got into it more, we did step back and spend more time on that because there were tensions that were coming up, especially the tension around funding intermediaries based in Greater Minnesota versus funding statewide culturally specific intermediaries that may have uneven reach in Greater Minnesota.”

Katina Mortensen, Director of Public Policy for Minnesota Council on Foundations
The pandemic presented a unique situation because it affected everyone, everywhere. Being a part of MDRF and the statewide efforts to address disparities exacerbated by the pandemic allowed stakeholders to feel hopeful.

- There was implicit trust in MDRF leadership and organizations — especially MCF and the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation — because of their credibility and reputation within the philanthropy and nonprofit sector in Minnesota.
- Most donors and some intermediaries were members of MCF and/or affiliated with the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation.
- Donors who were not part of the day-to-day work and/or the advisory committee were comfortable in a hands-off role.

“I know the trust level was there, and so if [MDRF] felt they had really great resources in place that they could pass the funding on to and the end user would absolutely get the result, we were great with that.”

Amy Sinclair, Executive Director of Thielen Foundation

- There was a collective understanding that communities needed help and needed it immediately. MDRF stakeholders were committed to collaborating, creating trusting relationships and resolving tensions in order to support their communities.
- In the advisory committee, mutual respect and grace for each other allowed for constructive conversations to take place to deepen relationships, particularly about community needs and equity.
- The effectiveness of MDRF empowered stakeholders to pursue other funding opportunities, participate in more collaborative funding and reexamine and change their own grantmaking processes. Many intermediaries used the groundwork and structure they built from MDRF to manage other large funds from the state and federal government.

“It was very reassuring knowing that we could be part of a bigger pie because that’s what these sorts of things require – having a community-wide strategy. To be able to write a relatively small check to the big piece and say, ‘Go forth, do good things with it. And we just trust you,’ was very reassuring.”

Brad Kruse, Philanthropy Director for Hugh J. Andersen Foundation
Racial equity needed to be prioritized from the beginning.

The pandemic disproportionately affected communities of color. Then, the murder of George Floyd underscored the prevalence of systemic racism in America. Society was in the midst of two crises, one of racial injustice and one for COVID-19.

- MDRF directed $3 million to BIPOC-led nonprofits and/or organizations that supported BIPOC small businesses in Minneapolis and St. Paul. There was targeted outreach by the advisory committee to Native-led and Black-led organizations to encourage them to submit applications.

- Stakeholders who represented Greater Minnesota felt it was important to bring attention to the BIPOC communities in rural communities. Even though they were isolated from what was happening in the Twin Cities, they still face the same racial disparities that were accelerated and heightened during the pandemic and civil unrest.

- Stakeholders shared a range of responses to the civil unrest and how they adapted their work to incorporate racial equity and justice.
  - There was deep reflection internally for many organizations, especially to shift attitudes and provide actionable steps beyond solidarity statements.
  - Stakeholders who led organizations already working in social change and justice affirmed that the murder of George Floyd reinforced what communities of color were facing every day. They echoed that the work they were doing was more important than ever.
  - For those who lived outside the Twin Cities, they watched the news coverage of the civil unrest on television, but it did not directly impact their work and communities. Proximity was key in how they understood and internalized the situation.
  - There was consensus that MDRF tried to practice equity throughout the process and weaved in a racial equity lens as well, but it was difficult to see how much the racial equity lens was applied and how easily it could be pushed aside to prioritize equality.

“We were trying to have an equitable model that would impact kids, seniors and mental health. That was the equity lens we were using. When the second disaster – [civil uprisings] – happened, it shifted to a racial equity lens.”

Sara Carlson, Executive Director of Willmar Area Community Foundation

“There were some critical voices all along that were saying that the biggest gaps for COVID-19 are race-related. Once the uprisings happened after the murder of George Floyd, there was far more recognition of that. And there was a shift, I think, in attitudes. Because this was not one person making decisions. We were a group of people making decisions. It went from some of us to the majority of us, saying that we need to do race prioritization.”

Bilal Alkatout, Senior Program Officer at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation
Overall, MDRF was a positive experience, but there were missed opportunities and improvements to consider for the next time.

“The principles of organizing around tornadoes or pandemic are the same principles that you organize around during a public safety crisis. You cannot ignore the economic implications of public safety. When everyone is prosperous, you don’t have to fear your neighbor.”

Louis King, CEO of Summit Academy OIC

- Active fundraising was not part of the strategy besides the one email sent to a list of potential institutional and corporate donors in March 2020 to secure initial funding. MDRF stakeholders wondered why MCF and the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation did not pursue more ways to fundraise in order to expand the pooled funding. A larger fund could extend beyond the summer and then be used exclusively for recovery when the time came. That said, MDRF took on the responsibility to meet the needs of communities because they felt it was needed at that time, but it was not meant to become the leader or the main source of funding in this space.

- MDRF created an internal structure that could be reactivated and repurposed in the future to deal with other disasters – natural or not.

- The principles of organizing around the pandemic and natural disasters can be applicable to other crises that are not visible and deeply rooted in disparity and inequity.

- The needs were great everywhere, but some intermediaries expressed that there should be more support for arts and culture and environmental organizations. These organizations play a significant role in community resilience, especially in the recovery phase.

- It was admirable that MCF and the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation did not take fees to manage the fund and MDRF stakeholders applauded them for that decision. However, the contribution of time, resources and staffing was significant. Next time, the organizations leading this work need to take into account administrative fees.

- Intermediaries had the option to include administrative costs in their proposal. For the organizations that did not or only indicated a small amount, they expressed that they should have been more thoughtful about the capacity of their organization. Administrative fees would have helped with capacity building and provide staff with additional resources and support.

- A donor of MDRF also provided a small grant to the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation to cover some costs such as hiring a few contractors.

- Intermediaries that applied and were not funded as well as the intermediaries who were denied in the first few rounds, but then awarded funding in later rounds, expressed the desire to receive feedback from the advisory committee to help them understand why they weren’t selected and/or receive advice on ways to improve the application.

“Personally I learned for the first time how grant making process can work, and how we can better help support the nonprofit sector partner and advocate with entities that hold so much power and money.”

Nonoko Sato, Associate Director for Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

“The big question on my mind and a lot of people’s minds in the nonprofit world is ‘What does this mean for the foundations who are part of MDRF – about what they’re doing with the rest of their funding profile?’”

Liz Richards, Executive Director of Violence Free Minnesota
Key Takeaways

**OVERALL FOR MDRF**
- Gather as much information about the situation, but be flexible and adaptable to changes and emerging needs.
- Establish transparent communication and approaches, particularly around equity, racial equity and equality.
- Determine how to measure impact, which could influence how data is captured (i.e. questions in applications and reporting).
- Include administrative fees in fundraising to support the organizations leading the collaborative, and allow intermediaries the option to include administrative costs in their proposal.

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**
- Representation across race, expertise, sectors and region is needed to guide and inform an equitable process.
- Have upfront discussions about expectations, intentions, values and roles to minimize tensions and establish clear common ground about power dynamics and who has decision-making authority.
- Be transparent in your communication about process and progress.
- Keep the application simple, but incorporate a feedback loop.

**DONORS**
- Trust in the people leading the work.
- Communicate how you want to be engaged throughout the process.
- Make connections and engage with other organizations to lay the foundation for future partnerships and collaborations.
- Provide support to launch the fund, and be open to additional support in response to later fundraising appeals.

**INTERMEDIARIES**
- Proactively search for funding opportunities and directly reach out to donors.
- An easy application and evaluation process places less pressure on nonprofit organizations.
- Invest time and resources into strengthening regrant capabilities.
- Consistently engage with communities to receive reliable information to help identify needs.

“One of the things we appreciated about MDRF was how easy and quickly the process moved. And so, that was definitely something we tried to model. We launched a grant opportunity that was this rolling, apply when you can, easy application that was accessible on our website.”

Angie Pilgrim, Director of Community Impact at St. Croix Valley Foundation
Impact: Small Business

HMONG AMERICAN PARTNERSHIP

Hmong American Partnership (HAP) received a $100,000 grant from MDRF to serve as a financial intermediary for communities of color disproportionately affected by COVID-19. HAP provided 88 grants and forgivable loans to support small businesses negatively impacted by the quarantine and social isolation measures enacted in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Kabo Yang, a local chicken farmer, received a grant from HAP to help with her lost revenue. Yang is a vendor at HmongTown Market, located in Saint Paul, MN; she acquired the business from her parents after they passed away. The business’ revenue decreased by 50 percent due to COVID-19; the majority of Yang’s buyers (mostly Hmong elders) use her chickens for cultural use (hu plig and ua neeb) and due to the pandemic, many customers were no longer having gatherings in their homes.

Sustaining the business through this tough time allows Yang to carry on a family tradition and play an important role in the Hmong culture. Yang shared, “I have a lot of elder Hmong customers that keep encouraging me to keep raising chickens because they still practice the Hmong tradition, and especially with the Hmong New Year coming around the corner. It’s been a tough year, but I pray that all this shall pass so we can all go back to living normally and enjoy being around our family and friends.”

Impact: Food Insecurity

GREATER WHITE BEAR LAKE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Greater White Bear Lake Community Foundation (GWBLCF) received a $20,000 grant from MDRF to provide grants to community-based organizations serving individuals and families, nonprofits and small businesses, to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through their regrating, GWBLCF supported Newtrax, a local nonprofit with a mission to provide transportation services to people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. In March 2020, their operations were temporarily suspended as their transportation services are for a population very vulnerable to the pandemic. With a parking lot full of idle buses and drivers, Newtrax decided to utilize these assets by creating programs to distribute food to those currently in need.

In July 2020, Newtrax approached GWBLCF about seed funding to establish a local program to feed seniors and families in need whose food security had been negatively impacted by COVID-19. In addition to assisting families in need, this program would help address a huge economic need for many of the local restaurants. GWBLCF invested in the pilot, which leveraged $95,000. Newtrax purchased and delivered approximately 9,000 meals to those in need. Over $80,000 went directly to purchase meals from local restaurants struggling during COVID-19. This pilot program came to an end on December 31, 2020; however, a new program called “More Than Meals” was started with a similar purpose and at a bigger scale to continue on with the effort. Newtrax and the GWBLCF are continuing as partners in the “More Than Meals” program.
Impact: Youth Support Services/Homelessness

MDRF awarded $100,000 to Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation to be used to assist those who are most affected by COVID-19. The $100,000 from MDRF was pooled into the Northeast Minnesota Response Fund; in total $234,817 was distributed to 27 organizations. Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation provided a grant of $25,000 to Lutheran Social Service of Minnesota (LSS) for “Emergency Support for LSS Duluth Youth Services.”

Support from MDRF helped to ensure that youth in LSS’s residential and shelter programs were able to stay housed, connected to social and educational opportunities, attending telehealth appointments and COVID-free. LSS was able to provide education, PPE, social/emotional and basic needs support to youth in their residential programs; to date, none of their youth have tested positive for COVID-19. They attribute this to having 24/7 staffing and availability for safety. Staff and youth alike have also been trained on how to appropriately use PPE and they have ramped up cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Being able to purchase additional cleaning supplies, PPE and technology to help youth stay connected socially and educationally helped to keep them safe.

“Kayla,” a high school senior and resident, lost her job at a local restaurant due to the pandemic. Kayla had been contributing to her rent (which is put into a savings account for a future security deposit). LSS emotionally prepared the youth for this possibility and Kayla knew she would be okay because they had funding to help cover the cost for food and technology. Kayla didn’t need to worry about going out and trying to find another job. Instead, she was able to focus on her education, which she completed online. She didn’t need to dip into her savings account because all of her needs were being met. This made all the difference for her when things opened back up and she was able to find a new job. Kayla enrolled in a CNA class, got a job as a PCA and moved into her own apartment.

Another Door Emergency Shelter was able to safely stay open 24/7 – they are typically closed during the school day. Youth were able to transition to distance learning, continue their education and seek employment opportunities. They were able to attend doctor’s appointments and therapy sessions through telehealth, which they accessed through technology that was provided. Together for Youth Program, which supports LGBTQ+ youth, was able to help youth stay connected through virtual groups. They provided additional support by delivering “We Care Packages” to participants. These packages included activities, LGBTQ-affirming items and letters of support from people in the community letting the youth know they are cared about.
Methodology

MCF partnered with Seiche, a strategy and creative consulting agency committed to social impact, to engage MDRF stakeholders and to explore lessons learned. Between February to March 2021, Seiche conducted 21 interviews with donors, intermediaries and the advisory committee. For individuals who were unable to interview, Seiche sent a list of questions and received detailed written responses. Then, Seiche systematically reviewed interview transcriptions to identify salient themes.

APPENDIX A

MDRF Structure and Grant Rounds

There were three distinct components of MDRF: the advisory committee, donors and intermediaries. Between March and August 2020, there were five grant rounds distributing $11.6 million in funding.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

The committee provided recommendations to fund community intermediaries, while the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation held the final granting authority decision.

- Blandin Foundation
- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation
- Bush Foundation
- Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
- F. R. Bigelow Foundation
- Headwaters Foundation for Justice
- Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies
- Medtronic Foundation
- Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
- Minnesota Council on Foundations (Facilitators)
- Northwest Minnesota Foundation
- Office of Governor Tim Walz
- Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation (Facilitators)
- Southwest Initiative Foundation
- The Minneapolis Foundation
- Willmar Area Community Foundation/CommunityGiving
- Youthprise

INSTITUTIONAL DONORS

Additional donors include individuals, donor-advised funds and anonymous donors.

- Aroha Philanthropies
- ARR Family Foundation
- Associated Bank
- Benton Foundation
- Best Buy
- Better Way Foundation
- Blandin Foundation
- Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation
- Boston Scientific Foundation
- Bush Foundation
- Catholic Community Foundation
- Cargill Foundation
- Carlson Foundation
- Carlson Family Foundation
- Dorsey and Whitney Trust Co.
- Edward & Markell C. Brooks Fund from the Minneapolis Foundation
- Engelsma Family Foundation
- F. R. Bigelow Foundation
- George C. Power Jr. Family Fund at the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation
- George Family Foundation
- GHR Foundation
- Hardenbergh Foundation
- Hawkins, Inc.
- Hugh J. Andersen Foundation
- Isora Wells Foundation
- John Larsen Foundation
- Julie and Kirk Cousins Foundation
- Land O’Lakes Foundation
- Lulu Foundation
- Mardag Foundation
- McKnight Foundation
- Medtronic Foundation

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Eleven community intermediaries were granted $2 million from MDRF. Below is the list of grantees for March 27, 2020:

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<td>Artists, with specific focus on black, indigenous and people of color; LGBTQIA; and disability community</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Think Small</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>Licensed family childcare providers</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youthprise</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>Nonprofits supporting youth nutrition and distance learning, with specific focus on black and indigenous people of color</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Minnesota Initiative Foundations application submitted on behalf of the Northland Foundation, West Central Initiative, Initiative Foundation, Southwest Initiative Foundation, Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation and Northwest Minnesota Foundation.
**ROUND TWO**

Fourteen community intermediaries were granted $2.1 million in this round. Below is the list of grantees for April 3, 2020:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
<th>POPULATIONS SERVED</th>
<th>REGION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAPI USA</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Support for immigrant-led nonprofits and individuals with disabilities. Provides technical assistance and support for those with limited English proficiency.</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comunidades Latinas Unidas En Servicio (CLUES)</td>
<td>$400,000</td>
<td>Support for Latino families and organizations who need financial support for basic needs.</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Nonprofit organizations serving vulnerable populations in emergency and basic needs.</td>
<td>Northeast MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headwaters Foundation for Justice</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Small nonprofits with a specific focus on assisting black and indigenous people of color, LGBTQ and low-income individuals.</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunger Solutions Minnesota</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>Support for nonprofit food shelves and hunger relief.</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC)</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>Grants for Latinx and undocumented small business owners.</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Sioux Indian Community</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>Direct financial relief for tribal members</td>
<td>Redwood County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northland Foundation</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Support for small businesses considered critical to the community.</td>
<td>Northeast MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northside Funders Group</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Grants for BIPOC-led small businesses in North Minneapolis.</td>
<td>Minneapolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propel Nonprofits and Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), Minnesota Chapter</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>Support for mosques/centers to serve as a community spaces and service centers.</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester Area Foundation</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Nonprofits impacted by coronavirus.</td>
<td>Rochester/Olmsted County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Support for nonprofits that focus on essential needs.</td>
<td>Southern MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arc Minnesota, Inc.</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Support for individuals and families with children with disabilities.</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence Free Minnesota (and partners)</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>Financial assistance for victims/survivors of domestic and sexual violence.</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ROUND THREE**

Twenty-two place-based community foundations were awarded a total of $820,000 to support their local communities on April 21, 2020:

- Community Foundation of Grand Forks, East Grand Forks & Region
- CommunityGiving
- Duluth Superior Area Community Foundation
- Eagan Foundation
- Eden Prairie Community Foundation
- Fargo-Moorhead Area Foundation
- Golden Valley Community Foundation
- Greater White Bear Lake Community Foundation
- Initiative Foundation
- Luverne Area Community Foundation
- Mankato Area Foundation
- Northfield Shares
- Northland Foundation
- Northwest Minnesota Foundation
- Richfield Community Foundation
- Rochester Area Foundation
- Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation
- Southwest Initiative Foundation
- St. Croix Valley Community Foundation
- West Central Initiative
- Winona Community Foundation
- Woodbury Community Foundation

In addition, $1.2 million was awarded to the following intermediaries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
<th>POPULATIONS SERVED</th>
<th>REGION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Tribal members and their families</td>
<td>North East Metro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headwaters Foundation for Justice</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Small nonprofits with a specific focus on assisting black and indigenous people of color, LGBTQ and low-income individuals</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hmong American Partnership</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Support for communities of color and immigrant-owned small businesses</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Institute of Minnesota</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Financial assistance and case management for individuals and families</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis Jewish Federation</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Support for Jewish individuals and families and nonprofit organizations in crisis</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Nonprofits and small businesses serving older adults and individuals with disabilities</td>
<td>South West MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MN Immigrant Family Fund/Navigate</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>Individuals and families</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nexus Community Partners</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>BIPOCs who own cooperatives and small businesses</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northside Achievement Zone</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Financial and basic needs support for individuals and families</td>
<td>North Minneapolis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OutFront</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Support for individuals and families</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>St. Paul Jewish Federation</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Support for Jewish agencies and programs</td>
<td>Saint Paul Metro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Catholic Community Foundation of Minnesota</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Individuals and families (focus on undocumented) through parishes and Catholic schools</td>
<td>Saint Paul Metro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiwahe Foundation</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>American Indian individuals</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tubman</td>
<td>$30,000</td>
<td>Direct financial relief for individuals and families</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Earth Reservation Housing Authority</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Support for tribal members and their families</td>
<td>North West MN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ROUND FOUR

Twenty organizations were awarded over $3 million, with $2 million awarded to organizations supporting nonprofit recovery and community resilience in BIPOC communities, on June 3, 2020. $1.1 million was awarded to support additional nonprofit recovery efforts across the state. Grantee organizations included:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
<th>POPULATIONS SERVED</th>
<th>REGION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African American Leadership Forum</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>Community-based, nonprofit, Black-led and serving organizations that provide business support, training and education programming</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alliance for Metropolitan Stability</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>Support for community-based advocacy and immediate needs related to COVID-19</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrowhead Regional Development Commission, Arrowhead Area Agency on Aging</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>COVID-19 response funds to support critical service, technology, organizational development, homeless and/or Native American elders</td>
<td>Northland MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central Minnesota Council on Aging</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Support to nonprofit organizations that have unmet COVID-19 needs for older adults and family caregivers</td>
<td>Central MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community and Economic Development Associates</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Provide technical assistance to nonprofit organizations in rural communities</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Side Funders Group</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>Recovery support for BIPOC-led nonprofit organizations</td>
<td>Saint Paul, MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forum of Regional Arts Councils of Minnesota</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>Technical assistance for arts organizations</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Children's Alliance</td>
<td>$140,000</td>
<td>Technical assistance to CACs to support public health and child safety</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Employment Services Consortium</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>Workforce development services to diverse groups</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota State Bar Foundation</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Support to provide pro bono attorney assistance to nonprofit organizations during COVID-19</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Voice</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Partner support to provide assistance with programming, training and equipment</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Regional Development Commission/Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Support for organizations providing grocery and supply delivery for senior centers, caregivers and community organizations</td>
<td>West Central MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Support for reservation nonprofit and service organizations to advance recovery due to COVID-19</td>
<td>Northwest MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Paul Promise Neighborhood &amp; Amherst H. Wilder Foundation</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>Emergency funding for community-based, school-based, parent and public partners</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeastern Minnesota Area Agency on Aging</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Improved nutrition support services for rural communities and support for volunteers and older adults impacted by COVID-19</td>
<td>Southern MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Springboard for the Arts</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>Support for rural recovery network, convenings and economic development efforts</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summit Academy OIC</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Support to build community response infrastructures</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Foundation of Minnesota</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>Support transformative recovery through the COVID-19 Women and Girls Response Fund</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youthprise</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>Support to youth-serving organizations and programs</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### ROUND FIVE

Twenty-seven community organizations were granted $2.3 million. This was the fifth and final round of grantees. Below is the list of grantees for August 18, 2020:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>AMOUNT</th>
<th>POPULATIONS SERVED</th>
<th>REGION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian American Organizing Project</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Recovery support for Asian American communities</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Media Access</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Funds will support “Bicultural Healthy Living” and &quot;Cultural Intelligent Framework&quot; to help BIPOC community members to heal appropriately</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battered Women’s Legal Advocacy Project dba Standpoint</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Funds will be used to provide support for women who are victims of domestic violence</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chisholm Community Foundation</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>Recovery for communities within Northland, Minnesota</td>
<td>Northeast MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Rapids Area Community Foundation</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>Recovery for communities within Northland, Minnesota</td>
<td>Northeast MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater Twin Cities United Way</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Funds will support the emotional health and well-being of community partners</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hibbing Foundation</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>Recovery for communities within Northland, Minnesota</td>
<td>Northeast MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiative Foundation</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>Support for nonprofit technical assistance</td>
<td>Northeast MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Street Council</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Support for community organizations on the Lake Street corridor</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lao Assistance Center of Minnesota</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Support for Lao American children and families in Minnesota</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan Alliance of Connected Communities</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Technical assistance and operating resilience support for human service nonprofits</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Funds will go support the recovery of a tribal nation with goals rooted in self-sufficiency</td>
<td>East Central MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Homeownership Center</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>Technical support for Minnesota home ownership</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota Organization for Habilitation and Rehabilitation</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Technical assistance support for providers in service to the community</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minnesota State Bar Foundation</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Legal support services for nonprofit organizations</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northland Foundation</td>
<td>$200,000</td>
<td>Recovery for communities within Northland, Minnesota</td>
<td>Northeast MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northwest Minnesota Foundation</td>
<td>$68,980.05</td>
<td>Recovery for communities within Bemidji, Minnesota</td>
<td>Northeast MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Propel Nonprofits</td>
<td>$250,000</td>
<td>Recovery funds for nonprofit organizations</td>
<td>Statewide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rice County Area United Way</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>Recovery for communities within Southern Minnesota</td>
<td>Southeast MN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**CONTINUED >**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shoreview Community Foundation</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>Recovery to support communities in Shoreview, Minnesota</td>
<td>Twin Cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest Initiative Foundation</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>Technical assistance to support nonprofit organizations</td>
<td>Southeast MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Way of Douglas &amp; Pope Counties</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>Recovery to support communities in Douglas and Pope counties</td>
<td>West Central MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Way of Northeastern Minnesota, Inc.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>Recovery for communities within Northland, Minnesota</td>
<td>Northeast MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Way of Steele County</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>Recovery for communities within Steele County, Minnesota</td>
<td>Southeast MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Way of the Brown County Area, Inc.</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>Recovery for communities within Brown County, Minnesota</td>
<td>Southeast MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waseca Area Foundation</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
<td>Technical assistance support that brings nonprofit organizations into the digital marketplace</td>
<td>Southeast MN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Way of Cass-Clay</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
<td>Recovery for communities within Clay County, Minnesota</td>
<td>Northeast MN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

Interviewees

Seiche conducted 21 interviews with MDRF donors, intermediaries and advisory committee members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME</th>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amy Sinclair</td>
<td>Executive Director, Thielen Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angie Pilgrim</td>
<td>Director of Community Impact, St. Croix Valley Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Cullen Miller</td>
<td>President, Catholic Community Foundation of Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barb Yates</td>
<td>President, Think Small</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betty Christensen</td>
<td>Program Developer, Minnesota River Area Agency on Aging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bilal Alkatout</td>
<td>Senior Program Officer, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brad Kruse</td>
<td>Philanthropy Director, Hugh J. Andersen Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrie Jo Short</td>
<td>Senior Director of Community Impact, Saint Paul &amp; Minnesota Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawn Gange</td>
<td>Senior Development Officer, Northwest Minnesota Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Jolly, Ph.D.</td>
<td>President and CEO, Saint Paul &amp; Minnesota Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jody Jonas</td>
<td>Community Relations Manager, Best Buy Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah Morris</td>
<td>Social Impact Associate Director, Best Buy Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Jimenez</td>
<td>Executive Director, Latino Economic Development Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jo-Anne Stately</td>
<td>Director of Impact Strategy and Economic Vitality, The Minneapolis Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katina Mortensen</td>
<td>Director of Public Policy, Minnesota Council on Foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Her</td>
<td>Executive Director, Asian American Organizing Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liz Richards</td>
<td>Executive Director, Violence Free Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis King</td>
<td>CEO, Summit Academy OIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonoko Sato*</td>
<td>Associate Director, Minnesota Council of Nonprofits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Carlson</td>
<td>Executive Director, Willmar Area Community Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susie Brown</td>
<td>President, Minnesota Council on Foundations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Submitted written responses to the questions.
Impact Areas

MDRF provided 99 grants to intermediary organizations. Intermediaries reported that they supported a variety of issue areas within their communities. The chart below provides an overview of the issue areas funded through MDRF grantees. For example: 48 percent of grantees reported that they supported Basic Needs.

Note: Grants funded a variety of initiatives; therefore the percentage does not add up to 100 percent.

### ISSUE AREAS FUNDED THROUGH MDRF GRANTEES

- **Basic Needs/Food Security**: 48%
- **Nonprofit Resilience**: 42%
- **Access to Technology**: 26%
- **Housing Stability**: 23%
- **Small Business Support**: 23%
- **Mental Health**: 19%
- **Youth Development/Programming**: 18%
- **Technical Assistance Access to Government Programs**: 17%
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**: 13%
- **Healthcare**: 12%
- **Domestic Violence/Sexual Violence**: 10%
- **Childcare Providers**: 7%
- **Education**: 7%
- **Homelessness**: 7%
- **Elderly Programming**: 6%
- **Support for Arts and Cultural Institutions**: 5%
Basic Needs
The MDRF funded both state and local nonprofit organizations that specialize in providing basic needs to Minnesota’s most vulnerable populations and to several grassroots nonprofit organizations that pivoted to provide culturally specific needs and support services due to COVID-19.

Food Security
Support for existing and new food shelves, meals on wheels, direct stipends and other food distribution opportunities.

Housing Stability
Technical assistance and emergency financial support to secure housing for those experiencing homelessness and/or housing insecurity.

Mental Health Services
Professional help and social opportunities for those experiencing feelings of isolation, including access to technology, telehealth, volunteers to help seniors, warm-line for people to have someone to talk with.

Small Businesses
MDRF grantees provided a variety of support to small local businesses throughout Minnesota. This included small business technical assistance, financial stipends, and technical assistance/translation services to access government support programs.

Nonprofit Support (Crisis, Recovery and Resilience)
Due to COVID-19, nonprofits across Minnesota had to shift their operations to keep their staff and clients safe while maintaining and/or growing the number of clients they were serving. MDRF funded support to nonprofits for various needs, including U.S. Small Business Administration’s Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), technology, technical assistance and operational support for nonprofits to retain and scale staffing as needed.

Education
MDRF provided support to help educational programs to pivot online, including laptops, software, internet service and technical assistance. This allowed students to access online educational programs and continue social connections.

Homelessness
MDRF provided support to organizations serving people experiencing homelessness, including youth. The funds help to provide general operations, shelter and basic needs, including meals, healthcare and PPE for people experiencing homelessness.

Domestic Violence/Sexual Violence
Funding from MDRF allowed nonprofits serving victims and survivors of domestic and sexual violence to continue to serve clients. Organizations were able to shift to meet the needs of their clients including: access to an attorney, virtual crisis management, technical assistance and PPE to maintain in-person operations.

Access to Technology/Digital Divide
Funding from MDRF provided access to laptops for youth and elderly to help maintain social connections, internet access, hardware and software to allow nonprofits to work remotely.

Youth Programming/Mentorship
Funding from MDRF allowed youth development and programming for teens and young people across the state to continue.

Elderly Programming
MDRF helped community-based organizations and churches adapt their programming and secure volunteers to ensure elderly have access to prepared meals, transportation and social experiences.

Healthcare
MDRF supported the conversion to telehealth services to ensure access to healthcare for vulnerable populations.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
PPE for volunteers and essential nonprofit and essential workers.

Childcare Providers
The MDRF invested in intermediaries to redistribute funds to childcare providers (home and center-based) across Minnesota. When the stay at home order went into effect, many families of non-essential workers and families that experienced unexpected lay-offs pulled their children from childcare. Direct grants to childcare providers ensured they could continue to stay open and serve essential workers. Additionally, funds help to support relocation, staff salaries and PPE (thermometers, gloves, etc.).

Arts and Culture
COVID-19 has significantly impacted performing artists across the state. Support for arts and culture nonprofits helped to provide technical assistance, access to government resources and basic needs stipends to artists and performers. Additionally, support helped transition to a virtual platform.