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\$1 Million Fund Launches to Supplement California Community-based Organizations Seeking COVID Services and Recovery Funding
COVID-19 Services Insurance Innovation Fund partners with nonprofits to build organizational capacity and improve virus mitigation efforts

The Center at Sierra Health Foundation has partnered with [California Association of Nonprofits \(CalNonprofits\)](#) and CalNonprofits Insurance Services to launch the COVID-19 Services Insurance Innovation Fund, a unique initiative building the capacity of the state's nonprofit sector and supporting organizations involved in COVID-19 mitigation efforts. The fund will provide training, technical assistance and grants of up to \$10,000 to community-based partners to purchase insurance coverage.

Recent COVID-19-related federal, state and local government resources available to the nonprofit sector have required community-based organizations to carry additional levels and types of insurance coverage. This compliance requirement has become an obstacle for many nonprofits with authentic connections to the communities most heavily impacted by the pandemic, and would also bar them from participating in emerging recovery efforts.

“This is not just a problem for grantmakers and funders supporting efforts to respond to the current health crisis, but this will also be an issue for an increasing number of grantees throughout the field as recovery efforts are launched. To help ensure inclusive community participation and leadership, we knew we had to respond creatively to this unanticipated challenge,” said Chet P. Hewitt, president and CEO of Sierra Health Foundation and The Center at Sierra Health Foundation (The Center). “We believe transformative change in any cause is best positioned to succeed when it invests in the ability of community-led organizations and impacted populations to be essential partners in the design, implementation and delivery of supports and services directed toward their communities.”

The COVID-19 Services Insurance Innovation Fund is a first-of-its-kind collaboration. The intent is to decrease risks for community organizations and give them the tools to

navigate federal funding opportunities, including the need for insurance coverage and other requirements.

“This fund is a great model for supporting nonprofit organizations because it recognizes the important role community-based organizations play in the support systems people access every day. As recovery becomes the focus of COVID-19-related efforts in California, this fund’s emphasis on building community-based organizations’ capacities to leverage and obtain public funds is essential to sustaining the leadership of the state’s nonprofits,” said Jan Masaoka, CEO of CalNonprofits.

Organizations eligible to apply for COVID-19 Services Insurance Innovation Fund grants are community partners that have been awarded a contract from The Center to carry out a COVID-19-related project and demonstrate financial hardship in purchasing required insurance.

Many of the organizations qualified to apply for support have been funded to inform people about COVID-19 vaccination, especially in communities hit hardest by the pandemic. More than 200 community organizations across California have received a total of \$50 million through a partnership between The Center and the California Department of Public Health. These projects have reached more than 14.5 million Californians, resulting in 339,485 facilitated vaccine appointments and nearly one million vaccine appointment referrals since February 2021.

“Our network of community-based organizations is a central component of our strategy to reach those most disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, and they serve as our trusted messengers to assist Californians on their journey to become vaccinated,” said Sonya Harris, senior advisor of California’s COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force and California Department of Public Health. “This is yet another example of how partnerships lead to innovation. We’re grateful for The Center’s focus on reducing barriers for these organizations and ensuring they have the resources to do what they do best - helping others.”

Initial seed funding from the COVID-19 Services Insurance Innovation Fund is \$1 million.

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