



**United Way
of Northern California**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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United Way Fire Fund Drive: \$80,000 Raised to Date

More than 5,700 contacts reported on 2-1-1 as Shasta County grapples with blaze

REDDING, CA, July 29, 2018 – Contributions to United Way of Northern California’s Shasta County Fire Relief Fund totaled more than \$80,000 as of 1 pm Sunday, the agency announced.

“We are very grateful to everyone who is stepping up on behalf of the community,” said Larry Olmstead, President & CEO. “We continue to seek donations as the needs will obviously, and unfortunately, exceed the amount raised thus far.”

To donate, visit www.norcalunitedway.org or text CARRFIRE to 91999.

Olmstead praised individual donors as well as Tri Counties Bank, which provided seed money and is raising money for the effort through a GoFundMe site. Tri Counties Bank will also accept donations in person at any of their branches. Tri Counties and other banks and institutions are preparing plans for further support of the United Way fundraising effort. “Tri Counties has been huge,” Olmstead said.

The fire since Monday has burned nearly more than 89,000 acres, destroyed at least 517 structures, caused dislocation of 38,000 Shasta County residents and resulted in at least five fatalities.

“On behalf of our staff and Board of Directors, I’d like to express our extreme gratitude to the 3,400 fire personnel and all the emergency responders who are putting themselves in harm’s way to protect lives and property in Shasta County,” Olmstead said. “Our hearts go out to the families of those who have lost their lives, and to all who have lost homes or now face extreme hardship as a result of this unprecedented fire.”

Olmstead said planning is underway for distribution of relief funds, which likely will be in the form of emergency cash grants to families affected by the blaze. A citizen's panel will be formed to oversee the process, he said. Further announcements will be made within a few days.

Emergency officials again urged residents to call United Way's 2-1-1 helpline for information, including evacuation areas, road closures, shelters, transportation needs and other vital information.

Olmstead said 2-1-1 Shasta has handled more than 700 phone calls and more than 5,000 text interactions since Thursday. During routine times, 2-1-1 Shasta averages around 10 calls daily.

United Way of Northern California's administrative office was evacuated Thursday night. Staff, working remotely, continues to coordinate relief fund efforts as well as update the 2-1-1 database with information.

"Our team is working around-the-clock to update information for the public," Olmstead said. "We are doing the best we can to provide quality service, understanding that our resources too are obviously being stretched. Thus far, I've felt very good about the service we are providing and especially about the interaction with emergency responders and other agencies."

2-1-1 is a free resource. Residents can reach a live specialist 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year by dialing 2-1-1 or texting their ZIP Code to TXT-211. (898-211). Information on the Carr Fire and all other resources can be found online at 211shasta.org or 211norcal.org.

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About United Way of Northern California:

United Way of Northern California (UWNC) was established in Redding in 1953 and serves nine counties: Butte, Glenn, Lassen, Modoc, Plumas, Shasta, Siskiyou, Tehama and Trinity. Its mission is to fight for the education, income and health of all residents in the community. UWNC raises funds for non-profit agencies and operates two 24/7 human services helplines: 2-1-1 Shasta and 2-1-1 Tehama, collectively known as 2-1-1 NorCal. United Way also operates VolunteerNorCal.org, a volunteer match website. For more information about United Way of Northern California visit www.norcalunitedway.org.