

Aaron Rodgers Small-Business COVID-19 Fund



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Aaron Rodgers and the North Valley Community Foundation are joining forces again, this time to help small, locally owned businesses in Butte County weather the coronavirus pandemic.

Rodgers, the Green Bay Packers star quarterback and a Chico native, announced today that he will donate a half-million dollars to the Aaron Rodgers Small-Business COVID-19 Fund.

In an Instagram video announcing the grant program with Alexa Benson-Valavanis, NVCF president and CEO, Rodgers mentioned that many of his longtime friends are small-business owners -- "and they've been getting rocked," he said.

"I think it's important we don't leave the middle class behind because they are the backbone of our society," said Rodgers. "This is to get people through. ... People are in need right now and who knows how long we have to save these businesses."

NVCF will add \$100,000 from its COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund and an anonymous donor whose business benefited from government aid is also contributing \$100,000.

"Aaron continues to show up when we need him the most," said Benson-Valavanis. "This is a program we have been thinking about for some time as the pandemic continues to affect small businesses, which are the lifeblood of a community. Fortunately, we have donors like Aaron, who always keeps Butte County in his heart."

Restaurants and retail businesses have been among the hardest hit by the pandemic. This new grant program will benefit locally owned and operated businesses that have fewer than 20 full-time equivalent employees. Businesses that meet those criteria can apply for aid through the fund and will be asked to demonstrate need to get financial help for rent and other fixed costs. Go to www.nvcf.org to learn more.

Businesses can read about eligibility guidelines at nvcf.org. Applications must be filled out at nvcf.org and submitted by 5 p.m. on Feb. 12. The application must include a video up to three minutes long talking about how the pandemic has affected the viability of the business and the need for help.

Rodgers has been a valuable founding member of the Butte Strong Fund along with NVCF and Sierra Nevada Brewing Co. He also has been involved in coronavirus and North Complex Fire relief efforts.

NVCF has mobilized more than \$1.2 million in grants for coronavirus relief through its COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund.