



BUTTE STRONG

FUND



AARON RODGERS
NORCAL
FIRE RECOVERY
FUND at NVCF



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Butte County first responders will receive counseling and other health and wellness services in the aftermath of the Camp Fire thanks to a \$1 million grant from the North Valley Community Foundation's Butte Strong Fund.

The grant for the Butte County First Responders Trauma Response Program was requested by Butte County Sheriff Kory Honea on behalf of law enforcement and fire agencies in the county.

"The Camp Fire was an emotionally traumatic event that is part of the collective experience of the vast majority of first responders in Butte County," said Sheriff Honea. "The emotional trauma visited upon first responders as result of the Camp Fire added significantly to the cumulative trauma prevalent among them due to the day-to-day rigors of a stress-filled occupation.

"These funds provide us with an opportunity to proactively address emotional trauma among Butte County's first responders and promote strategies to protect mental and physical well-being throughout the span of their careers. I am so grateful for this funding and the incredible support our first responders are receiving from the North Valley Community Foundation and Butte Strong Fund."

The grant will allow the program to employ as many as four counselors with a background in serving the unique needs of law enforcement and firefighters.

The grant includes funding for individual and group counseling, and development of a peer-to-peer support network. In addition, a health and wellness program will include

fitness and yoga programs specifically designed for first responders, a public safety health and wellness fair, and development of a health and wellness app for first responders.

The sheriff notes first responders are often reluctant to seek help and admitting emotional trauma is seen “as a sign of weakness or an indicator that the individual is unfit for duty.” He says the cumulative effects on first responders, a year after the fire, are only growing and that a solution is needed.

“We recognize that it’s sometimes difficult for our first responders to ask for help, but we are glad they did. This is exactly the type of program the Butte Strong Fund can and should fund,” said Alexa Benson-Valavanis, president and CEO of the North Valley Community Foundation. “Many different factors contribute to law enforcement not seeking help. This confidential counseling program will help tremendously. Addressing the mental health needs of first responders is an important public service, just like the jobs they do every day.”

With the latest grants, the North Valley Community Foundation has granted more than \$24 million for community recovery via the Butte Strong Fund, Camp Fire Relief Fund and donor-designated funds.

The Butte Strong Fund provides funding for eligible organizations or local government entities that are directly serving people affected by the Camp Fire. Individual assistance is handled through those organizations with a centralized case management system.

Organizations interested in applying for Butte Strong Fund grants can visit [ButteStrongFund.org](https://www.buttestrongfund.org) to determine if they qualify for funding. Those that do can submit a brief grant inquiry before being invited to submit a full application. Staff at NVCF will facilitate the application process.

The Butte Strong Fund is still receiving donations. Tax-deductible donations can be sent to Butte Strong Fund, 240 Main St., Suite 260, Chico, CA 95928 or by visiting www.buttestrongfund.org.