
LESSONS LEARNED

Responding to the Gilroy Garlic Festival Shooting



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Mission

To Establish a Legacy of Giving,
Gilroy Foundation
Links Charitable Gifts
from Donors to the Vital Needs
of Our Community

Vision

By Engaging all Aspects of
Our Community, Gilroy Foundation
is the Recognized Leader
in Connecting Resources
to Community Needs

LESSONS LEARNED

Responding to the Gilroy Garlic Festival Shooting

FOREWORD

When the Gilroy Garlic Festival, a beloved tradition since 1979 in Gilroy, California, was shattered by an active-shooting tragedy on July 28, 2019, Gilroy Foundation sprang into action to support the victims and the broader community.

As community foundations, one of our most deeply held purposes is to serve the people in our backyards, in good times and bad. Community foundations are philanthropy's "first responders." Gilroy Foundation collaborated with the regional Silicon Valley Community Foundation to accept and distribute relief funds after the tragedy. The Gilroy Foundation effort was ultimately successful – but there were some bumps along the way that we learned from as we developed a better understanding of this type of disaster response and relief.

This guide is for other organizations, especially community foundations, that find themselves needing to respond to such a tragedy. It provides a basic framework for an effective response to situations that are confusing, complex, and emotional. It is not exhaustive, but we hope it will let others know some of what we learned in the days following July 28, 2019.

Donna Pray
Executive Director
Gilroy Foundation

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Disclaimer

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Chapter 1

FIVE KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL RESPONSE

Plan before acting. It is natural to want to make an immediate difference and just start collecting and distributing money. The overall recovery effort will be stronger if expectations are established in the beginning.

Work with others. It is important to coordinate your response with public and private sector groups at all levels.

Know your purpose. The purpose for relief needs to be clear – both to those in charge of it, so they make the best decisions about how to structure it and to the community, so people trust the effort enough to make donations.

Communicate. It is not enough to do the right thing – you need to make sure donors, victims, and members of the community understand how your process to collect and distribute relief aid will work.

Donor intent is paramount. When questions arise about the best way to disburse funds, remember why donors are giving to a victim relief fund - to provide direct support to victims.

Chapter 2

RESPONDING TO THE TRAGEDY

About 20 minutes before the Gilroy Garlic Festival's 6 p.m. closing time on July 28, 2019, a 19-year-old opened fire on the crowd at the Festival. Three people, including two children, were killed, and 19 others were injured. The gunman was shot and wounded by the Gilroy police and then turned his gun on himself, sustaining a fatal wound.

Donna Pray, the longtime Executive Director of Gilroy Foundation, heard about the shooting at her office, where she and her colleagues were assessing the fundraising they had done at the Festival that day selling sangria and wine coolers.

At about that same time, Michelle Fries, the Director of Nonprofit Support Services for Silicon Valley Community Foundation (SVCF), called Pray. And by the next morning, the two foundations had decided to establish the Gilroy Garlic Festival Victims Relief Fund, with Gilroy Foundation as the public face of the fund and SVCF providing oversight and administration. SVCF also seeded the fund with a \$10,000 donation. By 10 a.m. that same morning, the fund had its first pledge, a match of \$10,000 from Christopher Ranch, a local garlic grower. With more publicity about the fund and a PayPal donation option added to both community foundations' websites, donations came pouring in.

Gilroy Foundation had a scheduled board meeting a few days later, and, in partnership with SVCF, it set up a committee to oversee the fund: the Gilroy Garlic Festival Victims Relief Oversight Committee.

One of the key insights the Committee gained as it worked through how best to use the money it was collecting: Disaster response has several phases, and community foundations are well-positioned to engage in some of them, and other agencies and partners are better positioned to engage in other phases.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

This is the immediate relief effort and should be coordinated by the police, fire department, paramedics, Red Cross, and other similar organizations that are set up to offer immediate help. This phase normally lasts no longer than a week or two. The local district attorney's office may coordinate government aid to victims, which in Gilroy's case came from the California Victim Compensation Board. Because the Gilroy shooting was designated a domestic terror event, the FBI was also able to help victims receive immediate support.

RELIEF

Short-term recovery efforts generally last up to six months or so after the incident. This is the phase where a community foundation can be most effective. In this phase, victims need direct support, and the broader community may as well.

RECOVERY

The community's long-term healing can take years. The local district attorney's office, state agencies that focus on helping crime victims, and the federal government can provide support here. In Gilroy, this took the shape of a resiliency center, the Gilroy Strong Resiliency Center, paid for by a federal grant, that will provide services to the community for three years.

Initially, members of the Oversight Committee and both community foundations thought they should help victims with immediate needs – but they soon realized other organizations were better positioned to do that. They also thought that they would need to provide help to nonprofits during the short-term relief phase, but they learned that there were other sources of emergency funding for nonprofits.

Ultimately, the fund was used entirely to support victims.



Chapter 3

FIRST STEPS: SETTING UP A RELIEF FUND

IDENTIFY NEEDS

What does a community need to recover from a tragedy? The answer will depend on the specifics of the community and the event — and clear communication among community groups, first responders and the victims are essential. Although community foundations are not first responders, they can use their partnerships with community organizations and deep knowledge of community service networks to help identify the community's needs.

The most important lesson: Plan before acting. It is natural to want to make an immediate difference and just start collecting and distributing money, for example. But the overall recovery effort will be smoother with better coordination.

"We were trying to jump in and provide relief, and we should have stood back and talked to others," said Joel Goldsmith, Gilroy Foundation Board of Directors Member, and Chair of the Oversight Committee which distributed victim relief funds.

Some preparatory work can be done even before a potential tragedy occurs: Create a list of local, state and federal government entities, as well as organizations such as the Red Cross, and find out in general what type of help they can provide after a disaster and how best to contact them.

When a disaster occurs, contact these groups, and find out what needs they see in the community, and how they are able to help. This will help the community foundation identify the gaps.

Find out what the specific needs are, for instance has housing been destroyed so people are homeless? Are people losing wages because they are unable to work after the incident? Do people need food or help with medical expenses? Find out what services are available from various organizations.

The key is to talk to others — knowing what type of work the community foundation is best able to do — before leaping in to help.

Once you have identified needs, consider which of the needs the community foundation is best positioned to meet.

For example, initially, the Oversight Committee for the Gilroy fund thought most relief aid would offer support for out-of-pocket medical and funeral expenses. However, other funding was available for these purposes. The funds collected by Gilroy Foundation and SVCF were ultimately used to provide relief to victims who were shot, as well as to some who were traumatized by the event even though they weren't physically injured.

CONSIDER YOUR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION'S CAPACITY

Does your community foundation have the staff, office space, money and other resources needed to respond? SVCF has a large staff and was able to dedicate staff time to helping Gilroy Foundation for months after the shooting. However, Gilroy Foundation is smaller, so its community-facing role in the response eclipsed most of its other work for months. Part of your initial assessment of how you can help should include what resources your foundation will need. For Gilroy Foundation, the response disrupted all operating activities, including the loss of fundraising revenue that usually covered their annual operating costs. All employees worked overtime hours, and there were added costs such as office supplies.

CHECKLIST: PREPARING FOR A DISASTER

What kind of needs assessment and assistance will be available from other entities after a disaster? Make sure you know how to contact these government and private organizations when the emergency response begins:

- Police and fire departments
- City, county, and state emergency management officials
- District attorney's office
- FEMA
- Red Cross
- Federal agencies, i.e. FBI
- Local social service nonprofits

IDENTIFY RESOURCES

The Committee administering the Gilroy fund initially planned to use the money they were collecting to help cover victims' medical expenses. However, it turns out the state victim compensation fund is available for this purpose, so private donations are not needed.

This is just one example of why it is important to coordinate the response with public and private groups at all levels.

Once you have identified what the victims and the community needs are, look at what sort of help is available — so that you can plan for how the community foundation can fill in the gaps.

A few types of help to consider:

- 1) Local: The city government, local nonprofits, or the local community foundation may have services or funds available. For example, the City of Gilroy had a deadly weapons insurance policy that provided some funds after the shooting.
- 2) County: The district attorney's office can provide advocacy and support for victims of violent crime.
- 3) State: California operates the California Victim Compensation Board; other states may have something similar.
- 4) Federal: For cases that are identified as terrorist attacks, funding is available to help victims and the community from the FBI and possibly other agencies.

All these responder levels need to be coordinated so people in the community know where to get help and so efforts are not duplicated, and more importantly, not overlooked. The community foundation is probably not the right entity to provide money for victims' immediate expenses, such as hotel rooms or medical expenses, for example. But victims may hear that the foundation is collecting money for relief and approach the foundation for help. It's important for the community foundation to be able to tell them which local and state agencies can help with which needs.

It may be that a survey of local resources reveals gaps in the community's response capabilities that need to be filled. For example, one city in Texas did not have a local community foundation, and after a shooting, their Chamber of Commerce quickly established a community foundation under the Chamber's umbrella. For information about establishing a community foundation, contact the Council on Foundations (www.cof.org.)

Be sure to coordinate the community foundation's response with public and private agencies at all levels.

CHOOSE A METHOD OF SUPPORT

Once the local community foundation has determined what type of support would be most helpful to provide, it's time to focus on the mechanics of setting up the fund. The fund's purpose needs to be clear – both to those in charge of it, so they make the best decisions about how to structure it, and to the community, so people trust it enough to make donations. The fund also needs one organization to be the "entity in control," assuming responsibility for making sure the money is distributed fairly. In Gilroy's case, Gilroy Foundation was 40 years old and a trusted and respected community organization. As such, donors did not question their methods or protocol. The only questions they ever received were from friends / families of victims that were impatient to see the money distributed.

There are several possible models, and the best one may depend on what groups are working in the community, their relationships, and how you envision the money being distributed.



The models Gilroy Foundation and SVCF considered illustrate the range of possibilities available to a community foundation launching a community support project:

- SVCF could create and administer the fund, becoming the face of the relief effort. In this case, since SVCF was more removed from the situation than Gilroy Foundation, this was not the appropriate model. However, in some cities, there may be only one community foundation that could take on a project like this.
- SVCF could collect money and give it to the local community foundation, as it has done with other local disasters in the Bay Area in the past. For example, when SVCF collected money to help the victims of the Napa County fires, it gave that money to the Napa Valley Community Foundation, which owned and distributed it. However, this would have made Gilroy Foundation responsible for all the back-office and compliance work.
- SVCF could collect the money and regrant it to other nonprofits for distribution. This was not an appropriate model for this situation, in which donors clearly intended that the money go directly to the victims. But after a disaster such as a fire or a flood, for example, it's possible that collected funds would be best used by a nonprofit that is building shelters or new homes for victims.
- The model SVCF and Gilroy Foundation settled on was a partnership: SVCF would provide back-office support and oversight, and Gilroy Foundation would be the fund's presence in the community.
- Gilroy Foundation would also provide guidance and office space and logistical support to the Oversight Committee.

ESTABLISH OVERSIGHT

Collecting money and then distributing it requires oversight. A dedicated committee may be the best way to provide this. The Committee will likely meet frequently in the months after the incident, then meet less regularly, and ultimately disband.

To form this Committee, identify respected community leaders who are willing to serve. Describe the time commitment to them so they are able to commit to it. Determine what organizations or parts of the community should be represented – perhaps the city government should have a representative, for example – and how large the Committee should be. Getting broad community representation in the membership is especially important in large metropolitan or suburban communities where the effects of the tragedy go beyond one city.

In Gilroy, the Committee was charged with reviewing victim claims and distributing the money. The Committee was formed quickly, a week after the shooting, at a meeting of Gilroy Foundation's Board of Directors. In response to a call for volunteers, five Board members and one Emeritus Board member offered to serve. Fries from SVCF was also a member. The Committee met two to three times each week for the first several months, then once a week for two additional months, then as needed through 10 months. Committee members also spent time outside of the meetings talking to victims and doing other work for the Committee.

It was an effective group: The Board members were also active in other community groups, so together they had a good sense of the community, such as making appearances at public and private fundraisers.



Downtown Vigil August 2, 2019

FUNDRAISING IDEAS

In Gilroy, there was no formal fundraising done. Rather, the public, businesses and other foundations started their own fundraisers or just made cash donations.

Examples of community fundraising sources:

- Concerts
- Memorial merchandise such as t-shirts, hats, and bracelets
- Support from professional sports teams
- Lemonade stands initiated by youth
- Restaurants donating a percent of sales or making outright donations
- Donation jars at supermarkets, restaurants and other community locations
- Donations from local religious groups



In Gilroy, an organic movement created the #GILROYSTRONG slogan.

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY: GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT

A clear communications strategy is essential from the start of this process, and you should start crafting one as soon as you have clarified the role of your community foundation in the relief effort. Both victims and donors need to understand what your fund will be used for and how soon you will distribute the money. Taking time up front to answer the questions that potential donors, victims, and community members are likely to have will make the process smoother — and the process may also help the Committee clarify its purpose.

It should not be the role of the Committee to craft the message and communicate it, so it is important to determine who will do so. In this case, Gilroy Foundation assumed the role of primary communicator. Their Development Director and Executive Director worked closely with the Committee to ensure messaging was consistent and was updated regularly.

The first communication task, handled by Gilroy Foundation's Executive Director, was to send an email to all community leaders, community partners, Board members, donors and other key constituents to inform them that a fund had been established, explain the method by which donations were being accepted and assure them that protocols for the distribution of the funds were being established. It is imperative to establish confidence that money being donated will be equitably distributed — and to explain that this all takes time.

There is a tension between providing an immediate way for people to donate and moving carefully to be sure the funds are being raised for a clear purpose.

"When something like this happens, people have an instinct to want to help right away," Fries said. "If you don't create a mechanism by which people could give right away, it could affect fundraising." It could also lead other groups to start their own fundraising efforts that ultimately overlap with the community foundation's.

For the first few days after the tragedy, Gilroy Foundation's Executive Director answered emails and phone calls from other groups interested in setting up ways for people to get money to the victims — telling everyone that Gilroy Foundation, along with SVCF, was taking care of it, and referring people to the Foundation's website.

Key parts of initial messaging may include:

- We are here to support victims and will be here in the future.
- We are not emergency first responders.
- We will collect money for victims until XX date and we will disburse the funds starting on XX date.
- Victims who want to apply for money should contact XX for more information, which will be available soon.
- Victims who need financial help before money from our fund is disbursed should contact XX

“The more you can communicate and manage the community’s expectations, the less pressure the group distributing the relief aid will feel, because it will be understood.”

~ Joel Goldsmith, Gilroy Foundation Board member and Chair of the Oversight Committee.

In addition to initial messaging, a comprehensive communications strategy should be developed. Consider these issues as you draft the overall strategy:

- What platforms will best serve the affected community and those needing assistance? Consider social media, presentations to community groups, speeches at vigils or gatherings, and articles in local newspapers.
- Would your audience benefit from communications in languages other than English? If so, do you have translators who can help? Do you know the social media channels and local news outlets that are most popular with your non-English-speaking audiences?
- Draft statements and/or FAQs for various audiences.
- Who should most of the communication come from, if more than one community foundation or group is involved? In the case of the Gilroy fund, Gilroy Foundation took the lead on communications because it was the group closest to the community.
- Determine the cadence of communications. If your campaign will run for six months, you don't want publicity about it to disappear after the first two weeks. Consider how to keep it in front of the community for the whole campaign.
- Determine review and approval processes for communications with donors, victims, the public, media, and other audiences. Who will speak with the media for the campaign? Who will create the communications? In the case of Gilroy Foundation, the Executive Director was the only spokesperson.
- How can you get your story out while protecting victims' privacy? Reporters will want to be able to reach out to victims for quotes, but this information is confidential.

Finally, remember that communicating with victims who have been injured in a traumatic event can be emotionally taxing for both the victims and the committee members. Some considerations for setting up this communication:

- Be clear about how much involvement committee members should have with victims. It's usually best for committee members to help connect victims with advocates or counselors rather than having committee members assume those roles.
- Be clear with applicants about the criteria and process for awards.
- Communicate via email as much as possible, using organizational email addresses instead of personal ones.
- Likewise, use organizational phone numbers, not personal numbers, for phone communications. Consider the purchase of burner phones if members will be doing a lot of phone communication.
- Let committee members know they can seek counseling or other support, if needed. Helping victims of trauma can be emotionally taxing.

SETTING THE TONE

Communicating about a tragedy can be tricky. Here are tips for handling two especially sensitive issues:

- You will need to send information about the relief fund and process to possible victims, enabling them to self-identify. Use words that inspire confidence, like "sensitive," "diligent" and "confidentiality."
- It is likely that, at some point, people will raise questions about how the foundation is handling the fundraising or distribution. Describe how you are coordinating with relief efforts, identifying victims' needs, etc. Take a positive approach and avoid being defensive.

MULTICHANNEL COMMUNICATIONS

Once you know your message, there are many ways to disseminate it. This is not just a one-day event: You will need to keep the public informed and updated on a regular basis.

Consider these ways of getting the message out:

- **Public Gatherings.** Gilroy Foundation representatives attended local community gatherings such as mixers at the Chamber of Commerce and Rotary meetings. This helped demonstrate transparency and reassure the community that respected community members were involved. Staff members used a spreadsheet to track fundraising events and assign Committee members to attend them. They also provided the members with updated fundraising information and talking points before each event. Beyond the practical communication value of having Foundation representatives at events, it was important and reassuring to the community to see the face of Gilroy Foundation at fundraising events
- **Social Media.** Gilroy Foundation used social media, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and Constant Contact, to update the public and thank donors. Posts included data on how much money had been collected and upcoming fundraising events. Gilroy Foundation's Executive Director wore a #GILROYSTRONG t-shirt to work and took photos with donors who stopped by the Foundation office. These became social media posts to publicize the fundraising effort and give donors some recognition. In the months after the shooting, Gilroy Foundation's Facebook activity rose more than 3,500%.
- **Press Releases.** Frequent press releases helped make sure that information was available to the community, the victims and the donors.
- **Website Updates.** Gilroy Foundation's website took on a new #GilroyStrong look based on a slogan that was created organically in the community. The site played an important communications role. Website visits went up almost 250% in the months following the shooting.
- **Gift Acknowledgement.** Every check mailed to the relief fund, through SVCF or Gilroy Foundation, received a donation acknowledgement letter. PayPal donors received a donation acknowledgement via email. When cash was brought into Gilroy Foundation offices, some donors took the opportunity for a photo.

Communication is not a one-time event: you will need to keep the public informed.



Chapter 4

NUTS AND BOLTS: DISTRIBUTING THE MONEY

WRITE GOVERNANCE DOCUMENTS

To make sure everyone involved is on the same page and that all financial and legal requirements are met, you should put together governance documents at the beginning of the process. This is not necessarily easy to do in the first hours or days after a traumatic event — there is understandably much more focus on meeting the victims' and the community's immediate needs. But making sure the relief effort is set up properly will help prevent confusion and problems later on.

Consider these questions:

- What entities will be involved in the effort, and what roles will they play? In the case of the Gilroy fund, SVCF was the administrator and Gilroy Foundation was the public-facing organization. It is likely that you will want a community-based committee to oversee the distribution of relief aid, as well.
- When will the relief fund accept donations, and when will they be distributed? The Gilroy fund ended up taking in money and distributing it at the same time, which had the advantage of getting some money to victims even before the fundraising phase was over. However, this is not always the best way to handle this — it may be better to set a limited fundraising period and let everyone know that funds will be distributed after it is over. In the case of the Gilroy fund, both foundations created pathways for donors to contribute to the relief fund.
- Who will decide who qualifies as a victim and how to divide the money among the victims? The Committee can do this, as it did with the Gilroy fund. In some cases, a third-party decision maker can be helpful. (See below.)

SHOULD YOU ENLIST A THIRD-PARTY DECISION MAKER?

Although the Oversight Committee often decides who gets how much of the relief money, that is not the only way to handle these issues. One option worth considering: a third-party decision maker.

For example, Kenneth Feinberg has become a national legal expert on distributing money to victims of tragedies after spearheading the distribution of funds from the U.S. government's September 11 Victim Compensation Fund. The Gilroy Committee got advice from Feinberg. Another option: The National Compassion Fund is a nonprofit that does the work of identifying victims and distributing money, assuming the compliance and committee functions.

IDENTIFY VICTIMS

If money is being collected for distribution to the victims of a disaster, you will need to know exactly who those victims are. You will also likely want some way to determine how much money each victim receives – likely based on how badly each victim was hurt.

Making these determinations is not as easy. Privacy regulations, such as HIPAA, prevent hospitals from simply giving a list of gunshot victims to the local community foundation, for example.

In Gilroy, Committee members were able to use personal connections to identify victims; even so, a few came forward months after the event.

This means self-identification is likely the best route. Committee members can reach out to the District Attorney's office, the police, and local hospitals, asking them to pass on information to anyone who may be a victim to encourage them to come forward. The communication should explain who may qualify for money from the relief fund, and what they will need to do to identify themselves.

Identifying victims is not always as easy as it sounds due to privacy regulations.

CREATE A DISTRIBUTION PROTOCOL

A key document to guide the Committee's work will be a protocol for the distribution of funds.

The document should describe:

- How decisions will be made
- How money will be distributed, from which entities, and when
- How victims are defined for the purposes of getting aid
- The end date for fundraising, ideally between three and six months from the fund's opening. In Gilroy, the Committee set a date for applications to be submitted within six months. However, fundraising by outside groups continued a little longer, as events were planned by sports teams and other groups.

When writing the document, committee members should take into account:

- Whether materials should be made available in multiple languages
- How concerns about immigration status will be handled

In the case of the Gilroy Committee, the group ultimately included both primary victims – those who were hit by gunfire – and secondary victims as eligible for relief funds. Primary victims were awarded money based on how much time they spent in the hospital. Those who were treated for an injury but did not require an overnight hospital stay received the smallest awards among primary victims. The largest awards went to those who were hospitalized for more than four weeks and were severely injured, returning home with a disability, as well as to the families of those who died. Gunshot victims did not need to show financial need but instead provided proof of hospital treatment or death certificates.

The Committee also decided to give smaller hardship grants to victims who were affected by the attack but not hit by gunfire. For these grants, demonstrated need was part of the application process. For instance, vendors at the Festival were evacuated immediately, leaving personal items, equipment, and merchandise behind. These victims could apply for "hardship grants."

A key function of the Committee is to ensure that the relief money is distributed in compliance with the protocol. For example, the Gilroy Committee required documentation of hospital stays and deaths, as well as agreements from family members of minors and the victims who died about who was entitled to collect their award.

WHAT SHOULDN'T THE COMMITTEE DO?

A distribution protocol document should discuss what the Committee will not do – and who can do it instead. For example, members of the Gilroy Committee found that some victims assumed the Committee was able to provide not just money but counseling and emotional support – something that committee members had not been trained to do. Eventually, they found out that the District Attorney's office could provide a victim advocate for each gunshot victim. These advocates were better equipped to provide victim support, and Committee members learned to refer victims to them.

TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE PROTOCOL:

- Document everything. In Gilroy Foundation's case, everything from the Oversight Committee and Financial Records were uploaded to the "cloud." In addition, one paper copy of each document was saved and is locked in a secure location.
- Be transparent about whether fees will be collected on the oversight or management of relief assets.
- Make clear what sort of documentation will be necessary to confirm relief requests. This will deter fraudulent requests and help the Committee demonstrate its due diligence.
- Keep the work as transactional as possible. It is easy and understandable, when a tragedy has struck your community, to get caught up in the emotion of the situation. But do not let emotion guide committee decisions.
- Distribute all the money collected to the audiences named in the protocol. If the purpose of the fund is to support victims, no money should go to nonprofits or other agencies; you should be able to track all money back to direct victim relief.
- Be transparent. Report relief grant distributions fully and completely.

Applicants need clear information about what types of questions they will be asked and what information they will have to provide. They should be told clearly about the deadlines and timeline for decisions and payouts. The Committee's guidelines should also explain how checks will be distributed.

Several considerations come into play when setting up these processes:

- For victims, whose financial need is considered, should the Committee consider funds raised through online campaigns, such as a GoFundMe campaign? What about potential lawsuits? (The Gilroy Committee did not consider either when determining financial need.)
- Donor intent is paramount. In the case of the Gilroy shooting, donors gave money thinking it would go to the victims of the shooting, so getting the money to the victims was the most important, and only job of the Committee.

Although the Committee should follow the protocol as written, sometimes circumstances may require updates. For example, the Gilroy Committee's protocol was amended twice: once when the Committee realized it needed to add a category of victims that had been left out initially, and again when the fund was closed to indicate how the final pool of money was distributed.

MAKING GRANTS TO INDIVIDUALS

Foundations typically give money to other nonprofits, not individuals. Even for scholarships, for example, foundations usually send money directly to schools rather than to the students. But it is possible to set up a fund to benefit individuals in situations like the Gilroy shooting.

SVCF and Gilroy Foundation wanted to abide by the rules and also be ethical about how they distributed the money – that is, by making sure they were honoring donors' intentions.

When setting up a fund to benefit individuals, keep several points in mind:

- Make sure you have – and follow – guidelines for getting funds to individuals in a timely manner.
- You may have to ask potential recipients for personal information, including income and even medical records. Make sure you have a plan to keep this information confidential and secure.
- Make sure victims are front and center in your communications plan. It is important to let the whole community know what you're doing, of course, but it is especially critical to be sure victims know what they need to do to receive funds and how and when that will happen.
- The amount of money each victim receives needs to be confidential.

There are a number of possible ways to structure grants to individuals:

- IRS guidelines allow some grants to individuals in disasters, as long as those individuals are identified by a charitable class and financial need is verified.
- In some situations, a city council can issue an executive order to designate a community organization to distribute disaster relief funds to individuals.
- It may also be possible to ask the IRS directly for a waiver of rules that don't work in a particular situation.
- Silicon Valley Community Foundation and Gilroy Foundation ultimately relied on expert advice from attorney Kenneth Feinberg, a nationally known legal expert on victim compensation, who advised on the Gilroy fund's distribution protocol with its overriding goal of making sure all money raised went to victims of the shooting.

LONG-TERM SUPPORT

Although it is important to set clear boundaries about the start and end dates for a community foundation's fundraising, a foundation can also play an important role in discussions about long-term recovery needs and funding. There are several options for organizations looking for financial support for long-term community healing:

- Nonprofits may be able to get reimbursement from the federal government for expenses they incurred to support the community after a disaster.
- Grants may be available to support long-term recovery efforts. For example, in Gilroy, the Gilroy Strong Resiliency Center was established with federal grant dollars. It will stay in the community for a few years to provide counseling, financial support for medical expenses, and other support related to the impact of the shooting.
- Some grants may be available for specific purposes, such as maintaining a memorial.
- First Responders grants can also be helpful.

Chapter 5

CONNECTING TO LONG-TERM RECOVERY

The Gilroy Garlic Festival Victims Relief Fund stopped taking gifts in April 2020, after collecting over \$1.9 million. The principal beneficiaries were the 22 victims who were killed or injured by gunfire. An additional 98 victims received hardship relief. No administration fees were collected by either Gilroy Foundation nor Silicon Valley Community Found.

- **\$1,934,472.51 was collected**
- **\$1,678,917.47 went to the 22 shooting victims/families**
- **\$255,555.04 went to 98 hardship victims**

A last "lesson" Gilroy Foundation learned was that their "community" expanded from the tragedy. As donations came in from all over the country, one \$100 PayPal donation stood out in the early weeks. In the comment section they wrote: "This donation is from New Light Congregation, another victim of a mass shooting. We grieve with you." New Light had three of their members killed at the synagogue shooting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in October 2018. Gilroy Foundation Board of Directors adopted the practice of reaching out and making a donation to other communities where tragedy strikes.

The fund had achieved its purpose, which was to distribute donations from the community to the victims of the shooting. In addition to providing relief for victims, the fund gave community members a way to contribute to the healing after the shooting. And members of the Committee responsible for overseeing the fund, who were all deeply involved in the community, made personal connections while helping both victims and the broader community grapple with and recover from the tragedy.

The success of the fund illustrates the important role a community foundation can play in helping a community manage and recover from a tragedy. Likewise, the challenges the fund's administrators faced show how important it is to establish the fund's role: not as part of emergency relief nor as part of the long-term recovery, but as a short-term relief vehicle that helps victims in the first months after the disaster.

It is important for the community foundation to stay connected to broader recovery efforts. For example, consider how to keep donors engaged in community efforts even after the victim relief fund portion of the recovery is over. In Gilroy, as in any community affected by a disaster, the needs of the community will continue long after the immediate recovery is over.

Chapter 6

RECAP: QUICK TIPS FOR RESPONDING TO A TRAGEDY

- Form an oversight committee for the relief fund, with no more than 10 members. Read more in [First Steps: Setting up a Relief Fund](#)
- Where will your funds be coming from? Read more in [First Steps: Setting up a Relief Fund](#)
- Who will the money go to - victims or community service groups? How will you locate victims given privacy issues? Read more in [Nuts and Bolts: Distributing the Money](#)
- Establish a time frame for your fund – there has to be an end date. Read more in [Nuts and Bolts: Distributing the Money](#)
- Write a protocol geared to your specific foundation's or organization's policies. Read more in [Nuts and Bolts: Distributing the Money](#)
- Create an application for victims and/or service groups. Read more in [Nuts and Bolts: Distributing the Money](#)
- Document everything. Take notes at meetings and record everything from initial contact to ongoing support and communication. Read more in [Nuts and Bolts: Distributing the Money](#)
- Do your homework. Look to outside agencies that will support victims and your community as you push through your tragedy. Read more in [First Steps: Setting up a Relief Fund](#)
- Who will take in the funds, account for them, and write the checks — your foundation staff? A committee member? Read more in [First Steps: Setting up a Relief Fund](#)
- Keep your community updated through social media, the newspaper, the Chamber of Commerce, etc. Read more in [Communications Strategy: Getting the Message Out](#)
- Rely on victim advocates from county services and other mental health agencies to directly assist and support victims. Read more in [Communications Strategy: Getting the Message Out](#)
- Be transparent. Read more in [Communications Strategy: Getting the Message Out](#)

Chapter 7

RESOURCES

Other sources of aid for victims

- California Victim Compensation Board <https://victims.ca.gov/>
- FBI Victim Services <https://www.fbi.gov/resources/victim-services>
- Local city and/or county insurance

Community resources

- County command center
- District Attorney's office
- Nonprofit organizations such as Red Cross <https://www.redcross.org/>
- Community resource and counseling centers/services
- Food and shelter resources

Resources for foundations

- Affinity group - a group of colleague community foundations
- Northern California Grantmakers <https://nccg.org/>
- IRS Disaster brochure link: [irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p3833.pdf](https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p3833.pdf)
- Council on Foundations [cof.org/topic/disaster-grantmaking](https://www.cof.org/topic/disaster-grantmaking)

Other resources for shooting incidents

- Arrowhead United Way <https://www.arrowheadunitedway.org/> (San Bernardino regional center shooting)
- Ventura County Community Foundation <https://vccf.org/> (Thousand Oaks nightclub shooting)
- Sandy Hook Community Foundation <http://www.nshcf.org> (Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting)
- A Lesson of Sandy Hook: Err of the Side of the Victims <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/25/us/politics/sandy-hook-money.html>
- Families of Pittsburgh synagogue victims to get \$3 million from fund <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/families-of-pittsburgh-synagogue-victims-to-get-3-million-from-fund-620528>
- \$7.5 million in donations to Tech victims to be distributed https://www.pilotonline.com/news/article_9f94e9b4-df5a-5c5a-8954-5b5e855e431b.html
- OneOrlando Fund <https://www.oneorlando.org/> (Orlando nightclub shooting)
- National Compassion Fund <https://nationalcompassionfund.org/>
- Victim rights experts such as Kenneth Feinberg <https://feinberglawoffices.com/>



“Give Where You Live”