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## News Release

For Immediate Release

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## Help Those Hardest Hit by Coronavirus

Initiative Foundation Activates Central Minnesota  
Emergency Relief and Recovery Fund, Announces  
Additional Grantee, Loan Client Actions

The Initiative Foundation is activating its [Central Minnesota Emergency Relief and Recovery Fund](#) to meet critical needs in the region as we face the sweeping and unprecedented effects of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic.

The fund is being seeded with \$20,000 from the Initiative Foundation, and our hope is that others will join us in growing this fund for maximum regional impact.

Proceeds will be used to make grants to nonprofits and local units of government to assist disproportionately affected communities; to address the economic impacts of reduced and lost work resulting from the outbreak; to meet immediate needs of economically vulnerable populations caused by coronavirus-related closures; and to respond to increased demands placed on our stressed social support systems. Over the long-term, the fund can support recovery needs that will inevitably arise.

Gifts to this fund can support services that:

- Help those whose jobs are affected or will be affected in the near future.
- Help those who face food scarcity.
- Help those whose household utilities or housing may be affected, and more.

The Initiative Foundation has a long history of [effective disaster response](#), supporting recovery efforts following a major tornado in Wadena and a fire in downtown Melrose, for example.

"We're applying our disaster response and recovery experience to this new challenge," said Matt Varilek, Initiative Foundation president. "We intend to stand with Central Minnesotans through this COVID-19 epidemic for as long as it takes to recover and return stronger than ever."

### **Flexibility for Existing Grantees**

In addition to activating the Emergency Relief and Response Fund, the Initiative Foundation is reaching out to more than 50 regional grantees with open [Innovation Fund grants](#) to offer them the flexibility to use unspent funds to support general operations and disaster relief.

"This is a stressful and demanding time for many organizations across the region as they work to support the most vulnerable people in our communities," Varilek said. "We hope that by making grant funds more flexible, we can help cushion the financial impacts of the coronavirus outbreak so that these organizations can focus on providing critical services."

### **Surveying Small Business to Support Federal Assistance Request**

In partnership with the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, the Initiative Foundation is surveying all of its small-business borrowers to gauge the initial impacts of the coronavirus. The responses we receive will be made available to Minnesota Gov. Tim Waltz in his request for a federal disaster declaration and additional small business lending tools.

The [Initiative Foundation](#) exists to improve the quality of life and to build stronger communities within its 14-county region of Central Minnesota by offering business loans, nonprofit grants, leadership training and donor services through its Partner Funds programs. Since 1986, the Initiative Foundation and its Partner Funds have invested multiple millions in the region through targeted grants and business financing investments.

Connect with us



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