

Colorado Healing Fund
General Protocol for Response

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A. General Protocol for Fund Distribution

I. Colorado Healing Fund Background

The Colorado Healing Fund (CHF) was founded in 2018 by a group of victim advocates and community leaders to establish a secure way for the public to donate to support victims of mass casualty related to a criminal act in the state of Colorado, also known as a mass tragedy. In the aftermath of these events, there can be an outpouring of support and goodwill. Additionally, the internet and social media have changed the way giving occurs, which frequently leads to fraudulent activity. Prior to the formation of the CHF, there existed no coordinated process for a secure donation collection or distribution of funds. CHF was established to alleviate these concerns by providing a secure way for the public to donate and to fill in the gaps in resources. CHF is a 501(c) (3) non-profit organization. Donations are tax deductible.

II. Mission

The mission of CHF is to assist local communities with the financial, emotional and physical needs of victims of mass tragedies occurring in the state of Colorado. The CHF will serve as the single point in Colorado for the collection of public donations in the aftermath of a mass tragedy and in conjunction with community partners, CHF will coordinate the disbursement of funds to those victims.

III. Values

Compassion CHF provides immediate and long-term assistance and support to victims and communities who experience mass tragedy in Colorado.

Security CHF creates a safe and effective way for the public to make monetary donations to help victims and communities of these events in Colorado.

Transparency CHF provides information in a timely manner about money distributed by the organization to assist victims of mass tragedy but always maintains respect for victim privacy.

Partnership CHF collaborates with community stakeholders who are essential in collecting funds and providing support for victims and communities in the aftermath of these events.

IV. Board of Trustees and Advisory Council

Members of the Board of Trustees (“board”) and Advisory Council (“advisory”) are experts in victim assistance and disaster mental health in response to mass tragedy. These experts have built a plan based on experience gained from Colorado incidents and their work with representatives from other communities across the country that have experienced from mass causality events. The members of both bodies collectively have assisted in more than 50 mass tragedies across the country and have over 233 years of combined experience in response and recovery to mass tragedy incidents. Their extensive knowledge and expertise inform the CHF’s decisions.

V. Funding

CHF’s initial funding was granted by the Colorado Attorney General’s Office. Donations made in response to a specific event are held separate from the organization’s other accounts and five percent (5%) of all donations are used for administrative costs. CHF disburses funds to victim service providers on the ground actively working with victims and community members assessing their needs. CHF DOES NOT GIVE MONEY DIRECTLY TO VICTIMS, FAMILIES, OR THOSE IMMEDIATELY IMPACTED. These individuals will receive financial assistance from the organizations assisting with their unmet needs.

VI. CHF Activation

CHF has an activation plan in the case of a mass tragedy. Activation may come as a result of personal knowledge of an event, media coverage, a direct phone call or other contact. CHF’s executive director or board chairperson convenes the board using the most efficient means available. Participants are briefed on all facts known at the time; ideally, corroboration is possible with those on-scene. In deciding to activate CHF to accept donations for victims, consideration is given to the nature and scale of the event, the number of murdered and injured individuals, those directly witnessing or affected by the violent act, the likelihood of adverse community impact, and the potential for exhaustion of currently available resources.

A simple majority of present board members must vote in favor of activation. A response team is designated, and roles and responsibilities are assigned. Immediate steps are taken to advise the general public that CHF has a role in response and recovery.

Activation status for CHF is the active acceptance of donations in response to a specific mass casualty event.

VII. Response Team

The CHF response team consists of the executive director, board, and advisory members selected for their skills and expertise. This team is responsible for the overall control and operation of CHF until such time as the board determines CHF no longer needs to operate in activation status.

The response team duties include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Engage partners to make them aware CHF is activated and accepting donations.
- Interact with Colorado news media, and the Colorado public via social media to remind Coloradans of CHF's mission and purpose.
- Coordinate with public officials at the state and local level to assure consistent messaging regarding CHF's activation and the importance of verified funds for victims.
- Collaborate with local victim support organizations and the community foundations/organizations to determine funding needs.
- Manage and monitor the collection of donations to benefit victims and offer input regarding the suggested use and disbursement of funds.
- Assist in preparation of a final report to the board, after the activation period ends, including lessons learned.

VIII. Termination of Activation

There is no pre-determined duration for CHF activation. Every mass tragedy is different, and flexibility is crucial. The executive director and response team will discern with input from the local community when initial response activities are concluding, and they will recommend to the board that activation (active donation collection) is no longer necessary and move CHF into a phase solely focused on disbursement of funds. The board reconvenes and a simple majority of present board members must vote to terminate the current activation.

IX. Post-Activation

Termination of activation does not signal the end of CHF's participation in response and recovery. CHF's involvement may continue, and the organization

may remain actively involved in addressing the needs of the deceased victim families, as well as those injured and impacted, based on information received from the affected community and/or advisory council members. CHF may reserve a percentage of the collected funds specifically established for the mass casualty event to provide long-term ongoing support to these individuals as available and necessary.

X. Transparency

CHF provides periodic updates to the media and public to keep donors informed regarding how contributions benefitted families of the deceased and assisted those injured and impacted by the event, while also protecting the victim's confidentiality. CHF disburses funds to the victim assistance organizations, community mental health centers, and a variety of providers utilized by the affected persons. CHF publicly discloses the amount given to each receiving entity/organization, while also protecting the identity of individuals and victims to whom the funds ultimately are given. It is in each receiving organization's discretion to disclose any further information about how it disbursed CHF funds, keeping in mind the legal duty to protect a victim's confidentiality.

XI. Final Note on the General Protocol

The Colorado Healing Fund General Protocol for Fund Distribution establishes the non-profit's guiding principles. Every instance of a mass casualty event has its distinctive features and unique aspects. No governing policy can foresee every eventuality, specific community needs, or accurately predict each human response. CHF's leadership acknowledges this protocol is a living document which may require adaptation as times change and experience informs action. The board may, in the interest of justice and quality care of victims, adjust this protocol as is uniquely necessary in each activation.

B. Phases of Response and Contribution to Recovery

The Colorado Healing Fund (CHF) envisions a continuum of response and recovery after a mass casualty event in the state of Colorado, also known as a mass tragedy. CHF divides the continuum into three phases: Acute, Intermediate, and Long-Term. Funds donated to CHF are intended for disbursement in each phase. CHF supports victim assistance organizations and a variety of providers working on the ground with victims and community members in actively assessing needs and will then provide the monetary assistance and services to mitigate the impacts of the aftermath of these events.

The three phases of response and the attendant contribution to recovery are detailed below.

I. Phase One: Acute

The first phase of response to a mass casualty event begins at the time of the incident and typically continues through the period of funerals and memorial services for the deceased. In the immediate aftermath of a violent incident, the focus is on the families of the deceased, those who are injured, and those who are immediately affected as designated by the local victim service agencies including the victim compensation program administrator and the law enforcement victim witness coordinators.

During the acute response phase families who have lost loved ones receive financial assistance to cover death-related expenses that are not otherwise paid for by publicly administered victim compensation funds. It is customary for CHF to facilitate payment for air travel, rental vehicles, lodging for out-of-town relatives, and rent for example. Some completely unrestricted funds also may be made available to surviving family members.

Injured parties and those immediately affected also are eligible for funds to assist with emergency expenses and care related to their individual conditions. Travel costs may be paid for family members who are integral to a victim's care, recovery, and support system.

II. Phase Two: Intermediate

A wide range of victim needs will reveal themselves in the weeks and months after a mass tragedy. CHF, as well as victim services professionals, considers this phase to begin after funerals and memorials have been held and continue for twelve months post-event.

Depending on the nature of the incident, a resiliency or resource center may be established and staffed by victim assistance personnel and mental health professionals. CHF may help fund such an effort, if requested, as a best practice to reach the greatest number of impacted individuals and the broader community.

In the intermediate response phase, there is collaboration among agencies, organizations and individuals who are working to the same end - to meet ongoing needs and foster healing. CHF purposefully acts to fill gaps in services and assistance that are not paid for by other sources. CHF helps knit together the safety net for victims.

An application process may be implemented at this point to better identify and fulfill the needs of individuals. This may be utilized when there is a large-scale event producing a significant ripple effect in a community. This application phase is not always necessary though.

The one-year remembrance of a mass casualty requires careful planning and necessitates an increased visibility and availability of mental and emotional health support services. CHF recognizes it is an important funder during this time.

III. Phase Three: Long-Term

Many impacts of a mass tragedy manifest themselves years after the traumatic event. Individuals who thought they were beyond the point of accessing help may find themselves triggered by another incident in the news or a challenging personal event. Long-term needs may be cognitive, emotional, physical, behavioral, spiritual, or some combination of these.

CHF strives to ensure that funds are available to support the long-term, unanticipated needs of a community related to a mass tragedy. CHF continues to work with victim assistance professionals and service providers when these needs surface.