



CHRONICLE SEASON OF SHARING FUND

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

What is the history of the Chronicle Season of Sharing Fund?

The San Francisco Chronicle created the Chronicle Season of Sharing Fund in 1986, as an extension of the Emergency Family Needs/Housing Assistance Fund administered by Northern California Grantmakers in 1983-84. Since the San Francisco Chronicle started the Fund, more than \$67 million has been raised. All donations have been used to resolve critical needs and housing issues, and to provide thousands of emergency meals for people who might otherwise go hungry in the nine-county Bay Area.

May I donate goods to the Fund?

We are unable to manage donations of any type of goods, including toys, holiday food baskets, clothing, furniture, automobiles, etc. Please contact HELPLINK at 1-800-273-6222 for more information about organizations in your area who are seeking such donations.

Who is eligible for assistance and how do they find out about receiving help?

Senior citizens (60+) or disabled individuals and low-to-moderate income families with dependent children who have a one-time critical need and who reside in the counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Solano or Sonoma are eligible for assistance. Funds are also distributed to food banks in these counties. If you or someone you know needs short-term assistance and might qualify for a grant, please call 415-777-7120. This number will direct you to the county coordinator in the county in which you live.

What is the purpose of the Fund?

Despite public and private efforts, thousands of San Francisco Bay Area families and individuals slip through social safety nets. Typically, these are low-income people—many of whom are working at minimum wages or minimum hours—who have one-time emergency needs that can't be met through other existing resources. Through a network of 120 community service agencies, the Chronicle Season of Sharing Fund provides assistance to strengthen the stability of families in crisis. Basically, the fund pays bills on a short-term basis.

How does the Fund work?

Beginning on Thanksgiving Day and concluding New Year's Eve, the San Francisco Chronicle features stories of people in need. The Chronicle invites its more than one million readers to contribute to the Fund. Local agencies provide screening and referral services to individuals. Social service departments work closely with clients and prepare a detailed budget with the goal of finding and

closely with clients and prepare a detailed budget with the goal of finding and eliminating areas of concern. Once applications are approved, fiscal agents in each county disburse grants. All funds donated are distributed throughout the year.

Can donations be made directly to individuals featured in the paper or on television?

No, for a number of reasons, including:

- Direct donations to individuals will adversely affect other sources of income. For example, if an individual is receiving Social Security Income, Disability Income or Welfare-to-Work assistance, the government will cut that income exactly to the amount of the donation, therefore they gain no ground.
- Approximately 20 families are featured during the campaign. If only those families received assistance, they would share more than \$4 million and thousands of equally deserving individuals and families whose stories have not been told/shared would not get help.
- The people featured are representative of the ills of our society and are neither more nor less worthy than thousands of others who request assistance through the Chronicle Season of Sharing Fund. All donations to the Fund are used throughout the year to help people in stressful situations by providing one-time grants which will not affect other income.

What is the method of assistance?

Critical needs assistance is provided in the form of grants that are paid directly to the supplier of services. Assistance is also provided through food box and brown bag programs. Each year, Season of Sharing funds provide over 1.5 million meals and help to resolve critical needs and housing assistance issues for over 5,000 families. Through the years, thousands of children and their parents have been moved out of shelters and into permanent housing and the funds have prevented thousands of others from becoming homeless.

How are grants allocated to participating counties?

85 percent of the total funds donated are used for housing and critical needs. The remaining 15 percent of the funds are used to support food banks for emergency food services. All funds are distributed on a percentage basis among the nine counties.

How does the San Francisco Chronicle support the Fund?

The San Francisco Chronicle opens the drive each year with a contribution of \$30,000. The San Francisco Chronicle also pays the fiscal agent in each county an administrative fee of 2.5% of the total funds distributed for housing and critical needs assistance, in addition to paying \$36,000 to the nine county coordinating agencies (\$4,000 per county). Chronicle reporters and photographers interview people in need who are then featured in the paper during the campaign. The newspaper publishes information about the Fund, lists of contributors, a running total of donations to the Fund and a coupon advising readers how to contribute. Ads throughout the San Francisco Chronicle further encourage Bay Area residents to help their neighbors in need. At the conclusion of the campaign, the

San Francisco Chronicle publishes an accounting of funds donated and how funds were distributed.

Is a percentage of donated dollars allocated to cover administrative expenses?

No. Every dollar contributed goes to our neighbors in need. All administrative expenses are paid for by the San Francisco Chronicle, interest generated by the Fund, support from the Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund and by the more than 120 community service agencies who distribute the funds in each county.

Is donor information provided or sold to anyone else?

Absolutely not. We value each and every contribution and all are completely confidential. The only time information is provided is when, at the donor's request, names are published in the newspaper and contributions above \$1,500 are published in our annual report. Our donor database is private.

Are contributions tax-deductible?

Yes. The Season of Sharing Fund is a non-profit corporation exempt from income tax with 501(c)(3) status.

Are contributions accepted all year?

Yes. The account is open year-round. Contributions can be sent at any time to:

**Chronicle Season of Sharing Fund
P.O. Box 44740
San Francisco, CA 94144**

Who can I contact if I still need information?

Contact the Chronicle Season of Sharing Fund office at 901 Mission Street, San Francisco, CA 94103, via [e-mail at the San Francisco Chronicle](#) or call 415-777-7120. Please note that because our staff is small it may take us a few days to get back to you.
