



News Release

Contact: Peg Van Camp
info@sonomavalleyfund.org

Sonoma Valley Fund Announces New Findings on Sonoma Valley and its Charitable Sector

May 3, 2016 –Sonoma Valley’s nonprofit sector is surprisingly big, but the needs it addresses are even bigger, according to a new study released by Sonoma Valley Fund today. The study contains demographic and economic data about Sonoma Valley and a first-ever study of the charitable economy in our community.

The Valley’s nonprofit organizations had total revenue of more than \$113 million in 2014—up 23 percent since 2011 (2014 is the most recent year that could be studied). A significant portion of those resources—about \$34 million, or almost one-third—came from charitable contributions, mostly from individuals. By comparison, the operating budget for the city of Sonoma is just over \$31 million. So, it’s no surprise that our public nonprofit organizations are important to our community; their sheer size is significant.

However, the challenges that our community and these organizations face are accelerating. The Profile work, conducted by the Sonoma County Economic Development Board, shows that the Valley is growing, graying, diversifying and becoming less equal. One in four residents in the Valley is 65 years old and above; while the average for the state is just 15%. There has been a 70% increase in the number of families living in poverty in our community, even as we

approach a full-employment economy. And, Latino families are significantly more likely to be living in poverty, creating an ever-larger divide in our community between have's and have not's.

“For the first time, Sonoma Valley has an in-depth, baseline look at our community’s needs and its charitable resources,” said Peg Van Camp, President of Sonoma Valley Fund. “We envision this as a way to understand both the demand and the supply sides of the Valley’s philanthropy.”

Sonoma Valley Fund began work on this study six months ago, hoping to spur more dialogue about how Sonoma can better address the growing challenges that facing the community, Van Camp explained. “We call the report ‘Hidden in Plain Sight’ because we are struck by how important the implications are for donors and nonprofit staff and boards. This research is a new tool to help our community look ahead in a more strategic and systematic way.”

In addition to the details described above, the research reports show that:

- Latinos now comprise more than a quarter of the Valley’s population.
- The community has made a concerted effort to support youth and education—which has been by far the largest category of philanthropic giving. Some educational indicators show that focus may be starting to pay off.
- There are also clear gaps. Relative to the size of the aging population, few nonprofits exist to provide direct services to seniors. And no Valley nonprofit focuses on housing, arguably the Valley’s most significant problem.

In light of the comprehensive data, Sonoma Valley Fund’s report concludes that “there is a growing disconnect between the scale, interdependence and complexity of the challenges facing the Valley on the one hand, and the current capacities and capabilities of our charitable sector on the other. “We have an

urgent need to challenge donors and nonprofits alike, to seize new opportunities to work better and smarter, and to collaborate more closely. Especially in light of likely government funding cuts, we need to make sure that the resources we currently have are deployed effectively and efficiently, and at the same time, work to keep expanding the philanthropic pie.”

The full report, “Hidden in Plain Sight: Sonoma Valley and the Charitable Sector that Serves Us,” can be downloaded along with a separate executive summary at www.hiddeninplainsightsonoma.org. The Sonoma County Economic Development Board’s Sonoma Valley Community Profile is also available at this website.

An affiliate of Community Foundation Sonoma County, Sonoma Valley Fund was created and is managed by respected community leaders to help sustain and improve the Valley’s unique socioeconomic, environmental, and cultural qualities for generations to come. Along with the Foundation, Sonoma Valley Fund promotes and facilitates local philanthropy and legacy giving, helps nonprofits build successful legacy and endowment programs, encourages estate-planning professionals to discuss Sonoma Valley bequests with their clients, offers a set of prudent investment options for donors and non-profits, and provides trustworthy, responsible, and thoughtful stewardship of donor gifts. For more information visit www.sonomavalleyfund.org.