Sonoma County COAD
Community Organizations Active in Disaster

Woodside Fire Response

After Action Report - August 2026



I. Introduction

In late July 2026, smoke from the Woodside Fire pushed air quality across Sonoma County to unhealthy and very unhealthy levels, with particular impact in Guerneville, Forestville, the Russian River corridor, and Santa Rosa. Community organizations that serve outdoor workers, renters, youth, and children all reported urgent, unmet needs for N95 masks, especially child-sized masks. Sonoma County COAD stood up a short coordination effort over July 30th –August 1st to meet these needs.

II. The Woodside Fire and COAD's Response Efforts

The Woodside Fire broke out on July 30, 2016 and burned approximately 152 acres on the coast of Sonoma County, west of Highway 1. It destroyed four structures and damaged three others. There were two zones that were given mandatory evacuation orders, and part of Highway 1 was temporarily closed. The local Department of Human Services opened a temporary evacuation shelter that did not require outside resources. While the Woodside Fire was not a declared disaster and was thankfully contained within a

relatively short period of time, it impacted communities throughout Sonoma County in terms of poor air quality. AQI levels hit “unhealthy” and “very unhealthy” levels on July 30th and July 31st.

COAD's impact in disaster is possible through the collective efforts of our members.

Even though this was not a declared disaster, COAD still fielded and filled requests for supplies, and then matched those requestors with other members who had masks in stock. These resource requesters and resource fillers were:

- Latino Service Providers
- Positive Images
- Child Parent Institute
- District 5 County office
- Sonoma Immigrant Services
- County Department of Health
- Food for Thought
- Russian River Promotoras
- North Bay Organizing Project
- The Salvation Army
- Northern Sonoma CERT
- West County Community Services
- Russian River Alliance

Two organizations originally asked for masks but then met their own needs with supplies they found on hand:

- Ceres Community Project
- Sonoma Community Action Network

We stayed in close communication with the Department of Emergency Management throughout the event.

COAD connected Child-Parent Institute (CPI) to a mask source that let CPI redistribute masks to other COAD members in turn.

Sonoma County COAD
Community Organizations Active in Disaster

As smoke from the Woodside Fire drifted throughout the county, CPI reached out to COAD for N95s for children and parents. Rather than waiting on a single distribution point, CPI arranged to pick up 400 masks directly from the Salvation Army — keeping 100 for their own families and passing the remaining 300 on to other COAD member organizations, including tenants' rights groups working with vulnerable renters.

What started as one organization's request became a small redistribution hub of its own, reaching further than COAD's direct outreach could have alone.

COAD connected Sonoma Immigrant Services to two member organizations within the same day.

With no N95s on hand for staff or clients at its Santa Rosa office, Sonoma Immigrant Services turned to COAD for at least 20 masks. COAD connected them to Latino Service Providers and Positive Images — both within walking distance of their office — allowing Sonoma Immigrant Services to pick up masks the same day the request came in.

Northern Sonoma County CERT 600 hundreds of masks with West County nonprofits.

Northern Sonoma County CERT contributed hundreds of masks to West County organizations working directly with the communities most affected by the smoke, including community health workers and a local food distribution nonprofit — extending COAD's reach into West County through a partner outside its core membership.

III. Response Activities

Between July 30 and August 1st,, COAD staff and member organizations:

- Fielded incoming mask requests by email and text from member organizations across the county
- Distributed 600 masks held in COAD's own reserve directly to partner organizations

- Partnered with the County Department of Health Services to deploy masks to the County Services office in West County

- Connected organizations with unmet need directly to organizations and partners holding surplus N95 supply, including Salvation Army, Ceres Community Project, CPI, Positive Images, and Latino Service Providers

- Coordinated bilingually, receiving and responding to at least one request submitted in Spanish

- Arranged direct pickup and delivery logistics between requesting and supplying organizations rather than centrally warehousing masks

- Secured approval from the Community Foundation of Sonoma County to purchase 1,000 child-sized N95 masks, addressing a gap identified during the response

IV. What Worked Well

1. *COAD functioned as a coordination hub.*

Rather than centrally stockpiling and distributing masks, COAD connected organizations with need directly to organizations with surplus, which moved supply quickly without adding a distribution bottleneck.

2. *Existing member relationships enabled fast turnaround.*

Because requesting and supplying organizations were already COAD members, referrals (e.g., Sonoma Immigrant Services to LSP and Positive Images) were resolved within the same day.

3. *Requests were tracked to resolution.*

Nearly all logged requests were marked complete, with a clear record of who received masks and through which partner.

4. *Pre-positioned masks ahead of the event reduced the strain on the response.*

Sonoma County COAD
Community Organizations Active in Disaster

Before the Woodside Fire, COAD had already prepositioned 5,000 masks with immigrant-serving community organizations throughout the county. COAD believes this substantially reduced the volume of requests received during the response, compared to what demand would have looked like without that groundwork.

5. *County partnership extended reach into West County.*

COAD partnered closely with the County Department of Health Services to deploy masks to the County Services office in West County, reinforcing existing member coordination with a direct government channel.

6. *A funder relationship allowed COAD to close the child-mask gap quickly.*

COAD worked with the Community Foundation of Sonoma County to secure approval to purchase 1,000 child-sized N95 masks, directly addressing the shortage that multiple member organizations flagged during the response.

IV. Challenges & Opportunities

1. *Child-sized N95 supply was a countywide gap at the outset of the response.*

Multiple organizations independently reported no child-sized masks on hand. COAD has since secured Community Foundation approval to purchase 1,000 child-sized masks — the remaining work is getting them into the prepositioned network before the next event.

2. *The impact of pre-positioning is not yet measured.*

COAD believes prepositioning 5,000 masks with immigrant-serving organizations ahead of the fire reduced request volume during the response, but this has not been confirmed or quantified — worth validating so the strategy can be replicated with confidence.

3. *Tracking relied on a manual, single spreadsheet log.*

Sonoma County COAD
Community Organizations Active in Disaster

Requests, contacts, and status were tracked informally by hand; a lighter-weight intake form could reduce data entry burden during fast-moving smoke events.

4. *Health-sector coordination surfaced but was not fully resolved.*

A regional health center network (Aliados Health) asked whether COAD was coordinating broader resource distribution and requested Sonoma-specific materials to share with patients — a coordination role COAD could formalize for future air-quality events.

V. Potential Next Steps

- Quantify the impact of pre-positioning — compare request volumes in areas with and without prepositioned masks to confirm and document the strategy's effectiveness
- Distribute the newly purchased 1,000 child-sized masks across the prepositioned network ahead of the next smoke event
- Build a simple bilingual intake form for future mask/supply requests to replace manual email and text tracking
- Follow up with Aliados Health on a standing protocol for sharing Sonoma-specific air-quality resources with regional health centers
- Capture this response as a short case example in COAD's smoke/air-quality preparedness materials