

**CONTACT:**

Lori Warren  
Director of Marketing & Communications  
[lwarren@redf.org](mailto:lwarren@redf.org)  
(415) 561-6683

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**REDF Awards \$450,000 to Social Enterprises that Employ People Hard Hit by COVID-19**  
*15 employment social enterprises across nine states receive general operating grants paired with technical assistance*

**SAN FRANCISCO** (May 1, 2020) – Today, REDF awarded grants to 15 social enterprise businesses in 9 states that provide jobs and wraparound services to people who are vulnerable to both the health and economic challenges of the pandemic. The \$30,000 general operating grants will provide immediate financial support paired with advisory services from REDF’s experienced team. The resources will enable social enterprises to cover immediate expenses so that they can implement strategies to maintain operations and employee supports in this challenging environment.

“Most of the people employed by social enterprises have experienced poverty and traumas, like homelessness, that make them particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, and to the pandemic’s economic fallout. COVID-19 has hit the businesses that employ many of them especially hard,” said REDF President and CEO Carla Javits. “These exemplary employers have demonstrated their commitment to staying in contact with and providing basic supports to their employees, while making the hard decisions required to maintain their business capabilities so that they can provide as many people as possible with jobs now, and in the future.”

Awarded businesses include:

- [1951 Coffee](#), Berkeley, CA
- [America on Tech](#), New York, NY
- [Better Futures Minnesota](#), Minneapolis, MN
- [Billings Forge Community Works](#), Hartford, CT
- [CONBODY](#), New York, NY
- [Conservation Corps North Bay](#), San Rafael, CA
- [CUPs Coffeehouse](#), Baltimore, MD
- [Evanston Rebuilding Warehouse](#), Evanston, IL
- [InnerCity Weightlifting](#), Boston, MA
- [LA Conservation Corps](#), Los Angeles, CA
- [Lancaster Works](#), Lancaster, PA
- [Neighborhood Industries](#), Fresno, CA
- [Opportunity Construction](#), Steelton, PA
- [Project Return](#), Nashville, TN
- [Roca, Inc](#), Chelsea, MA

Recipients of the COVID-19 Relief Grants are REDF partners who are experiencing a sharp decline in business or fundraising income as a direct impact of the pandemic. Among the awarded businesses, forty percent are led by people of color or individuals with lived experience who bring personal and business expertise to the work at hand. Each organization has demonstrated a resiliency of leadership through

their efforts to transition business and programmatic operations to respond to the changed circumstances.

The awarded organizations employ hundreds of young people and adults who face significant barriers to employment, like histories of homelessness or incarceration. From implementing technology solutions that bring services online, to helping their participants apply for unemployment, and finding innovative ways to bring their products to customers who are following shelter in place guidelines, the awarded organizations have taken decisive action to adapt their businesses. Funding and technical assistance from REDF will help support their resiliency.

The \$450,000 in awarded funds represent the first of several emergency relief opportunities available to REDF partners. As part of REDF's crisis relief support, all partners have access to specialized technical assistance, advice from practitioners on how to take advantage of Federal relief programs, curated resources, and virtual convenings with their peers through [REDF workshop.org](https://www.redf.org/workshop). To learn more about how REDF is supporting our employment social enterprise partners during this crisis, [click here](#).

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## **ABOUT REDF**

REDF (the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund) is a pioneering venture philanthropy accelerating a national movement of employment social enterprises – revenue-generating businesses that invest the money they make into helping people striving to overcome employment barriers get jobs, keep jobs, and build a better life. Independent research shows this approach works. It leads to greater economic security and mobility and a significant rate of return to society—\$2.23 in benefits for every \$1 invested.

For more information, visit [www.redf.org](https://www.redf.org).