

**Press Release**

For Immediate Release

June 17, 2022

**National Compassion Fund to Distribute Victim Funds**

UVALDE, TX - Robb Elementary School victims' support effort receives backing from leading national authority on mass-casualty crime. The National Compassion Fund (NCF), a subsidiary of the National Center for Victims of Crime, will assist a local Steering Committee in developing and implementing a fund distribution plan for the victims of the tragedy on May 24, 2022. The philanthropic effort will be called the "Uvalde Together We Rise Fund," and will provide direct financial support to the families of those impacted that day.

NCF was founded in collaboration with parents and family members from mass casualty events such as September 11<sup>th</sup>, Columbine, Aurora, and Newtown. NCF has administered 22 of these funds nationwide. A service agreement with NCF was established by the Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country and the San Antonio Area Foundation to meet all service fees associated with the contract allowing 100% of donations to go directly to the established victim base.

NCF helps survivors navigate the process in a respectful, dignified, victim-centered manner. The organization also preserves the intent of donors who want to know that their gift is going directly to those harmed and will not be used for other purposes.

"Our hearts go out to the entire Uvalde community," said Jeffrey Dion, NCF Executive Director. "We are honored to join forces with Uvalde to increase charitable giving and help meet the overwhelming needs of the victims. We stand in solidarity with all of those impacted by this senseless violence."

A volunteer Steering Committee will be responsible for setting the Uvalde We Rise Fund distribution policy with guidance from NCF. The Steering Committee members are:

- Veronica Conoley, PhD
- Erika Garcia, M.D.; Vice Chair
- Mickey Gerdes; Chair
- Gregoria Ponce
- Sheri Rutledge
- Bianca Spies, LPC
- Virginia Sosa, OD
- Edward Trevino
- Julio Valdez
- Advisory members are Anita Busch, President of VictimsFirst, co-founder of NCF, and currently serves as a Mass Violence Relief Specialist and Advisor to the Fund, and Paola Bautista, who was a survivor of the shooting at the Route 91 Concert in Las Vegas.

The National Compassion Fund has expertise on how victims are compensated for loss, will advise the Steering Committee, administer the victim application and vetting processes, and coordinate the distribution of proceeds from multiple fundraising campaigns.

The Steering Committee will ensure that the voices of the victims are heard, as they are integral to the distribution process. Experts with experience in mass-casualty survivor compensation and the needs of crime victims will also be asked to serve in a volunteer capacity. The Steering Committee's work will be transparent and will inform the public of its deliberations in the distribution of funds.

Within the next two weeks, additional details will be provided about the Uvalde Together We Rise Fund's process; the Steering Committee's first working session is Wednesday, June 22, 2022. The Steering Committee will receive public input via town hall events to be scheduled in the near future and will keep the community updated about how the funds will be delivered.

At the time of this release, over \$13-million in donations have been collected for victims through five primary accounts:

- The Robb School Memorial Fund at [First State Bank of Uvalde](#).
- A [GoFundMe page created by VictimsFirst](#), a nonprofit network of families of deceased and survivors from previous mass shootings.
- An account at the [OneStar Foundation](#) in Austin.
- Survivors Funds at both the [Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country](#) and the [San Antonio Area Foundation](#).
- The Uvalde Community Response Fund with the [Texas Bankers Foundation](#).

All of these funds will be pooled into the Uvalde Together We Rise Fund for distribution by the Steering Committee to victim families and others directly affected.

---

#### About the **National Compassion Fund**

The National Compassion Fund is a subsidiary of the National Center for Victims of Crime, the nation's leading resource and advocacy organization for crime victims and those who serve them. The National Center for Victims of Crime is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and an authority on how victims are compensated for loss. The National Compassion Fund has led distributions to victims of mass events in Fort Hood, Chattanooga, Orlando, Las Vegas, El Paso, and Parkland, Florida.

#### About **First State Bank of Uvalde**

Founded in 1907, First State Bank of Uvalde has played an essential role in Uvalde's growth and development. The Bank manages approximately \$2-billion in assets and has locations Dimmit and Real counties in addition to its Uvalde County branches. The Bank is collecting donations for victims through the Robb School Memorial Fund. These donations will be pooled with the Uvalde Together We Rise Fund for distribution. To donate visit [First State Bank of Uvalde](#), call 830-356-2273 or mail a payment to P.O. Box 1908, Uvalde, Texas 78802.

### About the **OneStar Foundation**

OneStar Foundation, based in Austin, is a nonprofit focused on strengthening Texas communities by creating pathways for individuals and organizations to engage, connect and accelerate their impact. It advances service and volunteering as effective solutions to our state's toughest social challenges. As a nonprofit born from state government, OneStar carries out its unique mission with direction and guidance from the Office of the Texas Governor. [OneStar Foundation](#) has been supporting Uvalde by serving as the public charity receiving donations for the Robb School Memorial Fund in coordination with First State Bank of Uvalde. Based on the local steering committee's direction, these funds will be pooled with the Uvalde Together We Rise Fund for distribution.

### About the **Texas Bankers Foundation – Uvalde Community Response Fund**

The Texas Bankers Association (TBA) and Independent Bankers Association of Texas (IBAT) have united to establish the Uvalde Community Response Fund under the auspices of the [Texas Bankers Foundation](#), a 501(c)3 non-profit that provides disaster relief, financial literacy, and educational support. Donations are being collected from individual banks, their employees and customers as well as major national brands. These donations will be pooled with the Uvalde Together We Rise Fund for distribution. Individual donations to the Uvalde Community Response Fund may be made via the Texas Bankers Foundation [HERE](#). For corporate contributions, contact Foundation Director [Jocelyn Carby](#).

### About the **Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country**

The Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country, based in Kerrville, is a public charitable foundation that makes grants to nonprofits and awards academic scholarships in 10 counties: including Bandera, Blanco, Edwards, Gillespie, Kendall, Kerr, Kimble, Mason, Real, and Uvalde. The Community Foundation is collecting donations for survivors through its Uvalde Survivors Fund. These donations will be pooled with the Uvalde Together We Rise Fund for distribution. To donate, visit [Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country](#) or mail a payment to 241 Earl Garrett Street, Kerrville, Texas 78028.

### About the **San Antonio Area Foundation**

The San Antonio Area Foundation (SAAFdn) has served as the city's community-giving headquarters for nearly 60 years, growing to become one of the top 20 community foundations in the nation. The Area Foundation serves as San Antonio's most trusted and impactful philanthropic partner, managing more than 500 charitable funds nearly \$1 billion in assets. The Area Foundation is collecting donations for survivors through its Uvalde Survivors Fund. These donations will be pooled with the Uvalde Together We Rise Fund for distribution. To donate, visit [www.saafdn.org/Uvalde](http://www.saafdn.org/Uvalde) or mail a payment to 303 Pearl Parkway, Suite 114, San Antonio, Texas 78215.