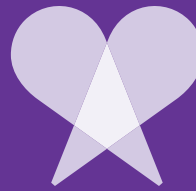


Follow Spot:

What We Accomplish Together

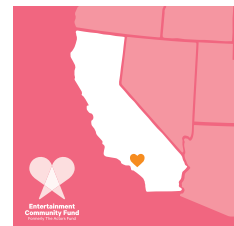
Spring 2025, Vol. 2



**Entertainment
Community Fund**
Formerly The Actors Fund

Southern California Wildfire Response

Our hearts are with everyone in Southern California impacted by the wildfires. In response to this crisis, the Entertainment Community Fund has mobilized quickly to provide comprehensive support to entertainment industry professionals who have been displaced or have lost their homes. This includes:



- **Disaster Emergency Financial Assistance:** Grants to assist with essential expenses like groceries, food, clothing, medical needs and more.
- **Resource Connections:** We regularly update a dedicated California Wildfires Information Page (entertainmentcommunity.org/CAFires) and Resources Page (entertainmentcommunity.org/SoCalResources2025) with vital information including national and local resources, offerings and fire-specific aid in Los Angeles.
- **Wildfire Specific Webinars:** In January, we held a webinar with FEMA representatives about FEMA applications, troubleshooting tips, understanding common myths and more. A representative from the Small Business Administration also presented on low-interest home and business loans. Additional webinars addressed legal and insurance issues.
- **Ongoing Support Groups:** Providing counseling and mental health support through groups led by licensed social workers at the Fund, these spaces offer connection, healing and resource sharing.
- **Career Support Workshops:** Helping entertainment professionals explore sideline employment opportunities by identifying and leveraging transferable skills.
- **Financial Wellness Program:** Helping entertainment professionals rebuild their financial map and savings while they are also struggling with wildfire-related expenses and recovery costs.
- **Mental Health Support Groups:** Providing counseling and emotional support to those affected.

To date, we have raised more than \$6 million in support of entertainment professionals who have lost their homes or been displaced by the Southern California wildfires. Hundreds of people have utilized our available resources, but the need is great. If you would like to make a donation in support of those impacted by the wildfires, please visit entertainmentcommunity.org/CAFireRelief.

—Your Impact in 2024—

Over 25,400 people

were helped through the Fund's programs

Over 3,500 people

participated in our clinical groups, educational seminars and workshops

Over 3,100 people

took part in Career Center services

Nearly 4,000 people

used services provided by our Artists Health Insurance Resource Center



A Message from the Chair of the Board

People who create and tell us stories are, by and large, “gig workers” who knit a living together from project to project.

They build portfolios and reputations based on each show they help create and present. The Entertainment Community Fund plays an essential role in their lives, preparing them for challenges and helping them deal with crises.

We support people who appear on stage, in front of and behind the camera and those behind the scenes. You may know a few of their names, but you may not know the scores of people who make theater, dance, music, film and television possible. And every story you see or hear reflects a collaboration of actions conceived by writers, directors, producers, designers, technicians and composers—craftspeople who create and build new worlds. It’s miraculous how it all comes together.

We are proud of the work we do and especially proud of how we helped people throughout the country during the pandemic and work stoppages. However, many in our industry still haven’t fully recovered from these difficult times, and now a new hardship has emerged with the California wildfires. All three crises challenge the people we serve and the Fund’s ability to help. With your support, we pledge to continue to be responsive to changing needs and to meet every crisis with compassion.

We recently added two wonderful leaders to our Board of Trustees: actor, activist and author Brooke Shields and Executive Director of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS Danny Whitman. Along with their fellow Trustees, they will lead the Fund into the future with strong programs, including new affordable housing developments, expanded career and financial wellness programs, extensive healthcare and insurance services, and the Actors Fund Home for our senior community.

Helping these people along the way is where you appear centerstage. It’s your support for the Fund’s programs and services that eases the journey for those in need. You help them with emergency financial assistance, health care, affordable and senior housing, and much more. You help them push through challenges so they can continue to tell stories that enrich our lives. Bravo and thank you!

Sincerely,
Annette Bening (she, her, hers)
Chair of the Board



A Special Letter from Shonda Rhimes

Last year, the Entertainment Community Fund publicly launched the \$160 million **ESSENTIAL Campaign**: a bold and

comprehensive effort that will allow the Fund to serve more people in more places. Dollars raised are being utilized for the significant expansion of services, maintaining an emergency relief reserve fund and addressing mission-critical capital needs.

When we conceived of this campaign, we never imagined we’d be responding to two strikes and now the devastating California wildfires. I’ve witnessed the Fund’s life-changing work for our industry, which is why I’m proud to be a Co-Chair of the **ESSENTIAL Campaign** Committee.

So far, thanks to this campaign, we have:

- Distributed almost \$60 million in emergency financial assistance since 2020 to more than 33,000 individuals, with more to come in the months ahead
- Launched our online portal where people working in entertainment can access programs and services from wherever they are
- Added 20 human services staff to meet the increasing demand
- Opened 151 units of affordable housing in Hollywood for members of the arts community and announced construction of more affordable housing in New York City

Funding these accomplishments would not have been possible if it were not for the **ESSENTIAL Campaign**.

You are essential to the Fund’s future, just as performing arts workers are essential to our industry. Every gift is meaningful to the dedicated people who bring you entertainment essential to a full life.

When you make a financial commitment to the **ESSENTIAL Campaign**, you strengthen the safety net, so critical today, for performing arts and entertainment professionals who are essential to the cultural vibrancy of our country. For more information, please visit **entertainmentcommunity.org/ESSENTIAL**.

With Gratitude,
Shonda Rhimes (she, her, hers)
Producer, Screenwriter &
Entertainment Community Fund Supporter

Staff Spotlight: Renata Marinaro

Managing Director of Health Services

Renata Marinaro, LMSW, is a licensed social worker who has been with the Entertainment Community Fund for over 18 years and currently serves as the Managing Director of Health Services. Among her many responsibilities, Renata oversees Fund staff who counsel our clients nationwide about health insurance and offer health care referrals through the Artists Health Insurance Resource Center.



“We help those in the entertainment community with the nuts and bolts of life, like health insurance and housing, so they can continue to create art and inspire us all.”

—Renata Marinaro

Thanks to Renata and her exceptional team, we’re able to keep our community healthy and capable of pursuing their chosen careers. She explains, “We provide a very concrete service—navigation of the health insurance

industry and enrollment in coverage. We focus on education, counseling and advocacy work.”

Renata says the most rewarding part of her job is “helping people understand health insurance, which can be opaque and boring, in a way that makes it enlightening and empowering.”

Part of her motivation to help people in entertainment stems from her father. He was an actor for many years and lived in Manhattan Plaza, an affordable housing complex in New York City. Seventy percent of the residents who live in this building are performing artists.

She confides, “I always admired his passion for his craft. But I have nowhere near the guts or resilience to do what performers do!” With her work to promote healthier lives and careers, Renata’s own passion shines through. We appreciate and applaud her dedication!

Donor Spotlight: Ruth Nerken

Entertainment Community Fund Board of Trustees Member

Ruth Nerken made her first gift to the Entertainment Community Fund 30 years ago, and she’s been a generous donor ever since. In addition to her financial support, she also serves on the Fund’s Board of Trustees and as Chair of our Advancement Committee.

As an actress, Ruth personally understands the challenges of a life in the performing arts and entertainment industry. Throughout her career, she’s performed on television shows, in commercials and in touring productions. What’s more, she’s also a respected longtime acting teacher.

Ruth has also seen our work firsthand: many of her friends, colleagues and former students have received our help. In addition, she has personally benefited from our resources and seminars on Medicare and Social Security. “The Fund is an incredible organization that doesn’t just give money, but [provides] services,” Ruth declares.

As a lifelong supporter of the entertainment industry, Ruth wants everyone to recognize the joy those in the performing arts bring into each of our lives and how much they deserve our support.



“The Fund is an incredible organization that doesn’t just give money, but [provides] services.”

—Ruth Nerken

“Every day, these people take us away from our humdrum existences or the stresses of living in this century,” Ruth says. “And there are people behind every single performer, whether it’s a director, lighting person or makeup artist.”

With her generosity and commitment, Ruth is a guiding light to so many—and to all of us at the Fund. Thank you, Ruth, for all you’ve done over the last three decades—and for being a part of the Entertainment Community Fund family!



Entertainment Community Fund

Formerly The Actors Fund

729 Seventh Avenue, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10019
entertainmentcommunity.org

—Your Newsletter Enclosed—



Save the Date!

Entertainment Community Fund Gala

Monday, April 21, 6 pm ET

New York Marriott Marquis, New York, NY

Join us to celebrate and strengthen the entertainment and performing arts community across the nation. Your support of the Gala allows the Entertainment Community Fund to address the

unique needs of our community with services focused on health and wellness, career and life, and housing.

The evening will celebrate Academy Award-winning actress, dancer and singer **Ariana DeBose**, theater owner and producer **James L. Nederlander**, and Tony and Academy Award winner **Denzel Washington** as they receive the Entertainment Community Fund Medal of Honor.

Get your tickets at entertainmentcommunity.org/Gala2025.



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