

Jumpstart

Powered by Bonterra

CASE STUDY

**Community Foundation of
the North State: bridging
the rural nonprofit digital
and capacity divide.**





The [Community Foundation of the North State](#) (CFNS) serves three counties in far Northern California that are far from the bustling beaches and bumper-to-bumper traffic often associated with the Golden State.



Program Officer Megan Conn describes the region as “a beautiful region with mountains, foothills, and valleys connected by the Sacramento River.” The foundation’s staff could tell that local nonprofit organizations were struggling with fundraising, not because of what they heard from the organizations, but because of what they saw in their grant applications. “A lot of the applications were to fund things that would be awesome for them to have in their regular

maintenance budgets, like computer upgrades or HVAC maintenance, things that they could fundraise for in a way that wasn’t grant-based,” Megan said.

A key part of that struggle is limited access and time to attend professional development and capacity building trainings traditionally held in neighboring metropolitan areas. According to Megan, many fundraisers in the area “are coming to the table with great passion in their hearts but without a professional background in fundraising. They aren’t driving 2.5–3 hours to Sacramento for training either. They came to nonprofit fundraising because they want to help people.”

Just as CFNS began to investigate solutions to these challenges, the COVID-19 pandemic began. “We were hearing from organizations that were seriously in the hole because they couldn’t host an in-person auction or benefit dinner,” Megan recalls. “It solidified for us how much our organizations relied on in-person fundraisers, and it was a tipping point in our work to offer them opportunities to diversify their fundraising so they wouldn’t be in this position again.”

CFNS needed a program that would both educate their grantees on fundraising technology and give them the tools and support to raise money through different channels. That resource was Jumpstart powered by Bonterra.

Jumpstart powered by Bonterra helps nonprofits to engage their communities, diversify revenue, and sustain their programs.

Jumpstart: a fundraising program that lives up to its name.

Jumpstart is a year-long program powered by Bonterra and supported by foundations like CFNS. In the Jumpstart program, nonprofits are paired with a fundraising coach and provisioned with integrated technology needed to engage their communities, diversify revenue, and sustain their programs.

In April 2021, CFNS piloted Jumpstart with six of their nonprofit grantees and quickly found that the program truly lived up to its name: “Jumpstart actually makes a difference for these groups because of how robust and holistic it is,” Megan said. “We’ve heard from the first cohort group that Jumpstart put them on footing that will allow them to grow over time. Some had incredible fundraising gains over the previous year. And even for organizations that didn’t experience as much growth, their leaders shared that the program put them on solid ground that will help them keep growing.”

“It was as though we had finally gotten our organization to the river, but we needed to cross over to the other side in order to really grow as a nonprofit organization. The Jumpstart program provided the bridge and Ann (fundraising coach) provided the support to walk across it without falling. Now, we are gaining more attention and our network is expanding because we are more organized. We are developing stronger relationships with our donors because we can see exactly what their relationship is with us and what has inspired them to give.”

Mark Pomerville
Executive Producer
Project Spark Studio





Bringing together funders to promote growth.

In a rural region like the North State, there aren't many large, local funders. But, those who do serve the area know the value of working together for the greater good. That's why the foundation recruited three other funders in the area to join them in supporting the Jumpstart initiative. "We collectively understood the need for capacity building, and Jumpstart presented an opportunity where we could pool our resources and support this training model without doing all the work," Megan said.

Megan also shared that Jumpstart's comprehensive, but user-friendly system was appealing to the other funders:

“ Jumpstart is packaged in a way that was really easy for us to present as a solution to our funding partners. It offers tools organizations can use on their own to grow without relying so heavily on grants from local foundations.”





Harnessing online technology tools for success.

Megan can attest that often fundraisers “are only as good as the tools they have.” However, sometimes programmatic tools can be too complex for the small organizations CFNS serves. That’s what makes Bonterra’s Jumpstart program so appealing. “The beauty of Jumpstart is that it’s simple. It can be learned. It’s current,” Megan said. “The system gives organizations the ability to harness the power of the Internet to connect our remote communities with potential donors around the world.”



Take [Rescue Ranch](#), a dog rescue organization based in Yreka, California that was part of CFNS’ first Jumpstart cohort. Just two months after they joined, a wildfire ripped through the region, leaving hundreds of dogs injured and without homes. They used Jumpstart to send updates to their supporters via video and text and to raise money for animal evacuations and care.

To Megan, Rescue Ranch’s ability to harness the power of the platform so quickly after migrating “speaks volumes about how accessible and valuable the technology was to our organizations.” Using technology, rural organizations can reach interested individuals in different states and countries. That’s “invaluable for organizations who used to rely solely on in-person events for donor outreach,” Megan explained.



Offering sustainable support and taking grantmaking to the next level.

Like the nonprofits it supports, CFNS is also a relatively small organization. Investing in Jumpstart made sense to the foundation’s leaders because it was an opportunity to fulfill a need for their grantees in a way that was sustainable for their foundation.

“Now we know how to set up organizations for success,” Megan explained. “What I envision happening in the future is that they’re going to share with other organizations, explain how it made a difference for them, and encourage those other organizations to participate.” With that in place, Megan believes CFNS can move away from funding routine upgrades and start “supporting the next level of projects.”

About us

Bonterra’s Jumpstart program provides grantmakers with effective fundraising capacity building support for their grantees to create transformative change. The year-long program pairs nonprofits with a fundraising coach and provisions them with integrated technology needed to engage community, diversify revenue, and sustain their programs.

Is your foundation ready to advance your grantees’ fundraising to the next level? Visit bonterratech.com to contact us or schedule a consultation.