



WASHINGTON NONPROFITS

We make sure nonprofits have what they need to succeed.

April 5, 2020

Dear Members of the Washington Congressional Delegation,

We in the nonprofit community are grateful for your leadership and are proud to work side-by-side with you to support our communities during this difficult time. We share your commitment to ensure the wellbeing of Washington's residents.

We are concerned that the federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic does not adequately support nonprofits facing increased demand, nor does it ensure the financial survival of nonprofits whose revenue has been severely impacted. Nonprofits support communities in a variety of ways including but not limited to childcare, senior services, food security, arts, human rights, economic development in low income communities, homelessness, as well as responding to domestic violence and sexual assault.

We encourage you to adopt an approach of supporting nonprofits that recognize the short and long-term impacts on this sector so we can continue to support our communities throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis makes our work more essential than ever and will be necessary in the months ahead to ensure our communities recover. Specific recommendations for actions that will support nonprofits include:

- **Ensure that emergency grant and loan programs are accessible to nonprofits.** The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) offered through the Small Business Administration would provide an essential resource for nonprofits to maintain their workforce and stay financially viable through the pandemic. However, early reporting indicates that private sector entities of all sizes are utilizing their enhanced resources and financial capacity to capture a disproportionate share of those limited resources. A set-aside of emergency grant and loan funding should be created for nonprofits.
- **Include large nonprofits.** Expand eligibility for PPP and adjust the Mid-Size Business Loan program to include a PPP-like loan forgiveness component for nonprofits with over 500 employees.
- **Increase the federal unemployment insurance reimbursement for self-funded nonprofits to 100%.** Many of our communities' most vital nonprofits have self-insured for unemployment for decades, and now face an unprecedented situation which could put them out of business without this relief. A few examples in Washington include many Boys & Girls Clubs, Catholic Charities of Yakima, Community Frameworks in Spokane, the Kline Galland Home, Phinney Neighborhood Association and many arts and cultural institutions.

- **Expand the above-the-line charitable tax deduction** by lifting the \$300 cap or making this deduction retroactive for 2019 filings or extending through 2021 when recovery efforts will continue.
- **Be flexible regarding how current government funding is used by nonprofits.** Many of us are adapting how we deliver services during this time period and will experience interruptions in service. We depend on restricted federal revenue to pay our staff and keep our programs running so we can ultimately support our communities.
- **Recognize that nonprofit service providers are “frontline workers”.** From food bank employees to staffers in homeless shelters and permanent supportive housing facilities, nonprofit workers are putting their own personal safety at risk every day to serve on the front lines of the pandemic response. Federal efforts to support frontline workers must include these nonprofit employees. This includes but is not limited to: increasing availability of PPE, hazard pay, emergency staffing pool for when employees become ill, and mental health services for frontline workers and their families.
- **Appreciate the ability of nonprofits to reach and serve marginalized communities.** It is no secret that current federal legislation does not provide equitable access to direct economic relief for all US residents. Nonprofits have a unique level of trust and experience serving the communities left out by current responses and should be mobilized, prioritized, and supported to remedy these inequities.
- **Address rural and low-income community access to technology and broadband.** Provide funds for technology and training so nonprofits can move to remote work and virtual service models when possible. Recognize that rural areas need unique supports and nonprofits often are the only services available in hard to reach areas.

Delivery of our services through a social justice lens is of paramount importance to the nonprofit sector and the communities we serve. Nonprofits play a vital role in building economic, emotional, physical, developmental, and social well-being for all community members. Washington state is home to approximately 30,000 federally-recognized nonprofits, which employ 269,361 people in this state, all working for our collective benefit. For example:

- **Human service providers restore well-being** when it is disrupted by the unpredictable life storms that can affect us all, like a physical or mental health challenge, caring for an ailing loved one, losing a job, or experiencing the trauma of interpersonal or community violence.
- **Human rights advocacy organizations enforce and expand the rights of people who suffer injustice because of poverty or discrimination.** They fight for dignity, freedom, justice, equality, and peace for all communities, involving those who have been historically underrepresented.
- **Community development organizations revitalize low-income, underserved neighborhoods that have experienced significant disinvestment.** Their work supports development of affordable housing, improves community health through economic development, and plays a critical role in building community wealth.

- **Environmental conservation groups seek to protect the environment against misuse or degradation from human forces.** They preserve plants, animals and natural communities by protecting the lands, waters and air they need to survive – thereby improving the environment for all of us.
- **Arts and cultural organizations help build healthy, vibrant, equitable communities.** They bring joy, inspiration, and vitality to our all Washingtonians and provide a direct economic benefit through revenue and tourism.

Every sector of the nonprofit community is facing unprecedented demands as a result of the coronavirus epidemic, and it is challenging our ability to support the people and communities that rely on us. Current relief efforts miss the mark in supporting this essential portion of the Washington State workforce. Examples of these challenges include:

- Nonprofits, particularly service providers, are being called on to adapt quickly to new operating requirements, educate community members, and support vulnerable community members **without any new resources.**
- Many nonprofit service providers, such as food banks and behavioral health providers, are **facing increased demand for services.**
- Nonprofits tend to be under-resourced and under-staffed in the best of times. A drop-off in staff and volunteers due to illness, vulnerability to illness, and families in need of childcare are posing **threats to program continuity.**
- Many nonprofits are **already suffering significant financial losses** due to cancelled fundraising events, performances, conferences and other revenue streams. Like small businesses, nonprofits require help to recover economically.

In addition to the information provided above, nonprofits across the state will be compiling additional information on specific issues to support your continued advocacy for our sector and communities in Congress. These “supplementals” will include a point of contact(s) that your office can reach out to for additional information and we will submit them as they are available in the coming days. Topics for these supplementals may include but are not limited to:

1. Increased support for survivors of sexual assault and domestic violence
2. Needs unique to rural areas during COVID 19 pandemic
3. Mental health services for community members
4. Supporting aging populations during the pandemic
5. Facilitating professional development opportunities for workers while in quarantine

We also welcome requests from your office for specific information on topics that are a priority for you.

We hope this document serves as a conduit between your office and our state's nonprofit sector as we continue to work together to respond to this ongoing crisis. Thank you for all you do to represent our state, our communities and our organizations. We look forward to partnering with you on continuing Washington state's leadership in addressing this crisis.

Sincerely,

Washington Nonprofits (on behalf of 712 members)	501 Commons
ArtsFund	Boys & Girls Clubs of Washington State Alliance
Homes First	Inspire Washington
Housing Development Consortium of King County	
King County Sexual Assault Resource Center	Northwest Association for Biomedical Research
Partners for Our Children	PCAF (Pierce County AIDS Foundation)
Pioneer Human Services	Resolution Washington
Seattle Human Services Coalition	Seattle Works
Schools Out Washington	United Way of King County
United Ways of the Pacific Northwest	Work Opportunities
Women & Children's Free Restaurant & Community Kitchen	
Washington State Community Action Partnership	Yakima Valley Community Foundation
Youth Development Executives of King County	Young Women Empowered