



*Serving Nonprofits. Strengthening West Virginia.*

March 18, 2020

Dear Governor, WV House and Senate Leadership, and WV Delegates,

Thank you all for your efforts as we face the emerging threat of coronavirus in West Virginia. As you know, nonprofits touch the lives of everyone in our state and play a vital role in the state's economy and provision of services. In response to COVID-19, West Virginia's nonprofits are stepping up without hesitation to serve their communities, to protect public health, and to support their own employees. As you consider legislation to best equip the state to handle this pandemic, we would like to note a few provisions that would be immensely helpful to the nonprofit sector.

Attached is a letter to Congress, which highlights some concerns and solutions related to COVID-19 and possible economic stimulus packages at the federal level, many of which also apply at the state level. In addition to what is included in that letter, we urge you to consider the following provisions in West Virginia's potential legislative response to COVID-19.

- New and immediate emergency funds should be available to address increased costs to nonprofits to support the uninterrupted delivery of essential services that affect public health, such as stepped-up sanitation, take-out meals for the homeless, and pre-packaged food at food banks.
- Programs aimed at assisting employers or tenants through this crisis should be equally available and beneficial to nonprofit and for-profit entities.
- Temporary giving incentives will directly increase the amount of money that nonprofits have to direct toward the most pressing needs of the communities they serve.

It is important that you know what we are hearing from nonprofits:

- Nonprofits, particularly service providers, are being called in to adapt quickly to new operating requirements, educate community members, and support vulnerable community members without any new resources.
- Many nonprofits are reporting a spike in demand for services in the coming weeks and months.
- 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, children home from school, etc., will pose threats to program continuity.

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- Many nonprofits are already suffering significant financial losses due to cancelled fundraising events, cancelled performances, cancelled conferences, and other programs. Like small businesses, nonprofits will need help to recover economically.

In some cases, several factors may combine to create difficult challenges. For example, food banks and backpack programs for school children will be more needed than ever, yet they tend to rely heavily on volunteers, many of whom are senior citizens that may be unable to volunteer at this time for safety reasons.

We urge you to consult with nonprofit leaders statewide, as the state of West Virginia proactively responds to this crisis. Please let us know how the West Virginia Nonprofit Association can help in providing useful information or connecting you with leaders who can advise your efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tasha Anderson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tasha Anderson, PhD  
WVNPA Executive Director