

OCTOBER 21, 2020

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia

The Honorable Justin E. Fairfax
Lieutenant Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia

CC: General Assembly Leadership

RE: Support for the Commonwealth's nonprofits during the COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Governor Northam and Lieutenant Governor Fairfax,

Support for the nonprofit community is needed now more than ever. As nonprofit leaders in the Commonwealth, we urge you to ensure all nonprofits are included in your administration's continued response to the current health and economic crisis. Nonprofits must have the necessary resources to carry out their important work to provide for the health, safety, and wellbeing of all Virginians, especially the most vulnerable populations.

In the Commonwealth, more than 280,000 people, or 9% of the workforce, power more than 36,000 registered nonprofits.¹ Support for the nonprofit sector is not only a *social* necessity, but also an *economic* necessity. With inconsistent support at the federal level, our state and local governments must step in to support the nonprofits that work to improve life for every Virginian.

Nonprofits throughout the Commonwealth are continuing to step-up and pivot or increase programs to meet the insurmountable needs of our communities, while also experiencing reduced funding and resources.² As your administration responds to the crisis and plots a path to recovery, we ask that you consider policy measures that will strengthen the ability of nonprofits to support our communities:

- **Designate funding for ALL nonprofits:** Even with recent modifications, the application requirements of the Rebuild VA! Grant neglect the vast majority of nonprofits in the Commonwealth. Other states (such as Connecticut³, Delaware⁴, Maine⁵, New Hampshire⁶, North Carolina⁷ and Tennessee⁸) have succeeded in creating dedicated funding for nonprofits; we must do the same.

¹ <https://www.nonprofitimpactmatters.org/states/virginia/>

² https://www.thecne.org/index.php?cne_file=2020/05/VTH-Infographic_FINAL.pdf

³ <http://ctnonprofitalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Gian-Carl-Casa-Response-Letter-8-4-2020.pdf>

⁴ <https://business.delaware.gov/relief/>

⁵ <https://www.maine.gov/decd/economic-recovery-grants>

⁶ <https://www.goferr.nh.gov/covid-expenditures/nh-nonprofit-grants>

⁷ <https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2019/H1105>

⁸ <https://www.tn.gov/governor/news/2020/7/21/gov-lee-announces--150-million-in-relief-funds-for-tennessee-non-profits-.html>

- **Create a nonprofit task force or commission:** Nonprofits must be at the table as Virginia charts a path not only to recovery, but a reimagination of the social sector. Many other states have created such task forces (see Hawaii⁹, Maine¹⁰, Montana¹¹, New Hampshire¹², New York City¹³, and Tennessee¹⁴) with positive reactions from nonprofit leaders and direct benefits to communities.

This letter is signed by 11 organizations representing thousands of nonprofit members and millions of Virginians. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us as you continue to address the crisis at hand. We look forward to working with you to ensure the Commonwealth has a healthy and vibrant nonprofit sector that continues to serve ALL of our communities every day.

Sincerely,

Cristine Nardi
Center for Nonprofit Excellence
Charlottesville

Elizabeth Cromwell
Charlottesville Regional Chamber of Commerce
Charlottesville

Sherrie Armstrong
Community Foundation for a Greater Richmond
Richmond

Anne Marie Green
Council of Community Services
Roanoke

Evelyn Riley
Dan River Nonprofit Network
Danville

Karen Dutro
NetworkPeninsula
Newport News

Jan Bresch
Nonprofit Alliance of the Northern Shenandoah Valley
Winchester

Cynthia Schneider
Top of Virginia Regional Chamber
Winchester

Laura Toni-Holsinger
United Way of Harrisonburg/Rockingham County
Harrisonburg

Robert McKenna
Virginia Peninsula Chamber of Commerce
Hampton

Stephanie Gorham
VOLUNTEER Hampton Roads
Virginia Beach

⁹ <https://www.civilbeat.org/beat/house-speaker-names-business-leaders-to-coronavirus-committee/>

¹⁰ <https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/news/governor-mills-convenes-expert-committee-advise-states-economic-recovery-2020-05-06-0>

¹¹ <https://www.mtnonprofit.org/2020/04/17/governor-bullock-announces-task-force/>

¹² <https://www.governor.nh.gov/news-media/press-2020/2020415-goferr.htm>

¹³ <https://nycetc.org/ny-workforce-recovery-strategy-group>

¹⁴ <https://files.constantcontact.com/94c7b3c6be/49c96ff2-838f-44d6-ae9e-d279b14285fa.pdf>