

Leaders of Nation's Charitable Nonprofits Urge Congress to Go Further

March 23, 2020 | Posted in:

Tags: COVID-19

Coronavirus

[Press Releases](#) [1]

The organizations highlighted below express thanks to the Senate for taking the first step in recognizing nonprofits in its proposed relief package. However, we believe Congress needs to take further actions to ensure our ability to continue serving those hit the hardest by this crisis.

We appreciate provisions in the current proposal that may help some nonprofits — through Small Business Administration Loans, Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) grants and the inclusion of a universal charitable deduction — but there is still much that must be done to ensure the charitable sector can meet the frontline demands of the COVID-19 crisis. Specifically, we urge Congress to:

- **Expressly provide charitable nonprofits with \$60B in any emergency funding proposals.** The charitable sector needs an immediate infusion of \$60 billion and a mechanism must be constructed for a rapid infusion of cash to those organizations serving immediate needs in communities facing lost and declining revenue due to the pandemic
- **Create a robust universal charitable deduction** and allow post-March 1, 2020 donations to be claimed on 2019 and future tax returns. Improve the proposed above-the-line charitable deduction by significantly raising the cap and allowing all taxpayers to immediately claim the deduction on their 2019 taxes (due on July 15) and beyond.
- **Ensure all nonprofits qualify for new small business loans and remove the Medicaid exclusion and 500-employee caps.** Clarify that charitable nonprofits of all sizes are able to participate in the emergency Small Business Loan program by using the tax-law definition of charitable organizations (Sec. 501(c)(3) public charities), removing the cap on the number of employees, and removing the language that excludes nonprofits that are eligible to receive Medicaid reimbursements.

We understand that providing economic relief is an ongoing process; however, given that nonprofits generate 5.4 percent of the nation's GDP and employ 12 million people — more than the transportation, construction, and even manufacturing industries — it is imperative that Congress prioritize relief for the nonprofit sector.

We stand ready to work with Congress as the process continues so our sector can continue to help our communities and our nation respond to and recover from this crisis. We remain committed partners in providing aid and relief to the millions that we collectively serve.

ORGANIZATIONAL QUOTES

“Community-based human services organizations are connected to the communities we serve and vital to responding to the local needs of individuals, families and communities in this time of crisis,” said Susan N. Dreyfus, president and CEO of the Alliance for Strong Families and Communities. “The support of the federal

government in providing business continuity relief and flexibility in regulations is essential to ensuring that the work we do to support vulnerable children and families continues throughout the duration of this pandemic. We know Congress can do more to help us continue to serve our neighbors in their time of need.”

“Funding for charitable organizations is going to fall precipitously but the needs in our communities will not,” said Gary Reedy, CEO of the American Cancer Society and American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. “As our nation recovers from this pandemic, cancer patients will rely on services like free rides to the doctor, free lodging when cancer treatment takes them far from home and always available and trusted cancer information. Without federal funding support, we will face decisions with potentially bleak consequences for the cancer community we provide services to every day across the country — as will the rest of the charitable community regarding their mission delivery.”

“Nonprofits serve as frontline responders to national crises such as the novel coronavirus, providing resources and care to those facing profound disruption in their lives and communities, particularly the most disadvantaged among us,” said Nancy Brown, CEO of the American Heart Association. “The American Heart Association will be announcing rapid-response scientific research investments to accelerate our understanding of the cardiovascular implications of the coronavirus, with a goal of quickly developing more effective treatments. We join with our partner organizations in strongly urging Congress to include relief for the nonprofit sector in response to the coronavirus pandemic to ensure charities across the country continue their vital work.”

"Girls Inc. provides mentoring and programming for girls in our most underserved communities, so they can grow up to be strong, smart and bold. At the heart of our mission is providing the essential support and opportunities young people need to thrive, and this is never more true than in times of crisis," said Stephanie J. Hull, Ph.D., president and CEO of Girls Inc. "Our current public health emergency requires Congress to take urgent action so that nonprofits across the U.S. can continue our critical work at this pivotal time."

“Nonprofits are not only a critical support system for our communities, they also are major employers and contributors to our economy. The impact of COVID-19 has been eye opening for communities across the nation,” said Steven C. Preston, president and CEO for Goodwill Industries International. “Nonprofits are on the frontline, providing vital services to those hit hardest: to feed, house and provide job training and placement — but charitable organizations won’t be able to operate if they cease to exist.”

“The COVID-19 pandemic is a public health emergency. The longer it goes on, the more it also becomes a housing emergency,” said Jonathan Reckford, CEO of Habitat for Humanity International, who also serves as chair of Leadership 18. “When this crisis subsides, nonprofit organizations like Habitat for Humanity will be a key part of building back the economy and aiding those most impacted. Congress’s support of these organizations now will allow us to be ready to serve.”

"Nonprofit organizations are the lifeblood of civil society and step up to, and beyond, their call in a time of crisis," said Daniel J. Cardinali, president and CEO of Independent Sector. "We know that charitable contributions are likely to take a dramatic hit as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and its impact on our economy. To combat this, Congress must act to dramatically expand the universal charitable deduction beyond the provisions in the current Republican package. The amendment from Sen. James Lankford is a good place to start and we ask that Sens. Chuck Grassley and Mitch McConnell lend their support and allow a vote on this amendment."

“Now, more than ever, we are depending on support from the federal government to assist thousands of Jewish agencies serving people of all backgrounds, including hospitals, nursing homes, community centers, family and children’s service agencies, and vocational training programs,” said Eric D. Fingerhut, president and CEO of The Jewish Federations of North America. “And, at the same time, we hope Washington will incentivize all Americans to make charitable contributions which are the lifeblood of our vital work.”

“It makes absolutely no sense to exclude nonprofits receiving Medicaid reimbursement from the small business relief program,” said Paul Gionfriddo, CEO of Mental Health America. “To punish nonprofits for serving those

most in need - including those who live with mental health conditions and other chronic conditions that put them at high risk or poor health outcomes - is unjust and must be addressed.”

“Our communities are facing a confluence of challenges, the likes of which we have never seen before. Nonprofits are always on the front lines of response, relief, and recovery in times of disaster,” said Tim Delaney, president and CEO of the National Council of Nonprofits. “But our ability to help is in jeopardy. We need Congress and the White House to ensure that our organizations and our 12.3 million employees can continue playing the vital role we play for people in local communities throughout our country.”

“America’s religious and faith-based charities — our houses of worship, schools, soup kitchens and so many other social welfare programs — are on the frontlines of the novel coronavirus crisis,” said Moishe Bane, president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations (aka “Orthodox Union”). “We are striving to serve the material and spiritual needs of our fellow men and women, all made in the image of G-d, in this difficult time. Like all nonprofits, we cannot do this work without the required resources. While we know ‘man does not live by bread alone,’ in these most challenging times, we need maximum financial support from the federal government to sustain our communities in need.”

“Unprecedented times call for unprecedented measures,” said Brian Gallagher, president and CEO of United Way Worldwide. “The pandemic is already causing individuals and families, particularly those most vulnerable, to make stark decisions about their lives and livelihoods. To put it bluntly, nonprofits meet these people’s needs and many are being stretched to their limits. Unless Congress is willing to go further and ensure that all charities are able to access the resources required to keep their doors open, Americans will suffer and this crisis will be prolonged.”

“Nonprofits are doing everything in our power to meet the unprecedented needs of communities, but we can’t do it alone. We need help on a scale that only the federal government can provide,” said Kevin Washington, president and CEO of YMCA of the USA. “Congress must act now to ensure we can continue to fulfill our vital role in communities. If relief is not provided, nonprofits will be forced to scale back operations drastically, if they can continue at all. This will leave our neighbors and communities without essential resources and services they rely on.”

“If Congress doesn’t act quickly to provide aid to charitable nonprofits, the services we deliver will be disrupted and the people we serve will suffer as a result,” said Alejandra Y. Castillo, CEO of YWCA USA. “Across the country, demand for YWCA services like childcare for first responders, supportive housing for survivors of domestic violence and shelter for homeless women is skyrocketing. Community resilience in the face of this crisis is dependent on our doors and those of our nonprofit partners remaining open.”

Source URL: <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/article/leaders-of-nation-s-charitable-nonprofits-urge-congress-go-further>

Links

[1] <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/article-categories/press-releases>