

Covid-19 Response and Recovery Fund Decision-making Framework

Context:

Philanthropic dollars will be small relative to state and federal investments. The intent is to use them to complement the public sector's response to this crisis.

Governments at all levels (national, state, local) are creating new responses to community needs as the crisis evolves. It will be important for staff and members of the Advisory Group and Funders Group to stay informed about the evolving public sector response. It will also be important to use information on emerging community needs to inform public policy and to inform nonprofits about public resources that may be available to them. Responses currently include:

- financial relief for individuals (e.g. stimulus checks, enhanced unemployment benefits),
- financial supports for nonprofits (e.g. grants to provide specific emergency services, loans under Paycheck Protection Program), and
- policy changes so that emergency systems can be responsive in these times (e.g. changing rules on where and how school meals can be provided, moratorium on evictions and utility shutoffs).

Some groups of people will be left out of the public response (e.g., because of public policy related to an individual's legal status, tax filing status). The intent of this philanthropic effort is to understand who is being left out and to prioritize resources to support their health and safety.

Understanding Needs:

This crisis is upending the current service delivery systems for vulnerable people. The Fund will seek input from as broad a scope of organizations as possible to understand how it is changing lives, the demand for service, and the delivery of services. Some areas of impact we can anticipate are related to:

Loss of income from employment, leading to increased demand for services to meet basic needs. Organizations need to increase services in response to need.

Loss of access to critical services, requiring the rapid development of alternate service delivery systems because:

- The places where children and families ordinarily receive services are closed (e.g. school meals, mental health counseling)
- Individuals who are especially vulnerable to this virus do not want to put their health at risk by leaving their house

Increased health risks: especially for those who do not have a home to shelter in, are living in institutions, or when there is a need to isolate the ill from the well – need to develop a new response

Increased safety risks: for children and adults at risk of child abuse and domestic violence, as the most vulnerable families are isolated from supportive relationships, both personal and organizational.

Organizational/nonprofit loss of capacity due to disruptions to fundraising and volunteer engagement strategies at the same time that demands for critical services are increasing.

It is important to pay attention to the potential for this crisis to exacerbate the impact of existing disproportionalities experienced by communities of color, immigrant and refugee communities, populations with communication barriers, populations impacted by the digital divide, and other marginalized populations.

Initial Fund Priorities

Ensure that funds are invested as **equitably** as possible across vulnerable populations, communities, and geographic areas, in response to identified needs.

Fund organizations/strategies that are providing a critical response to emergency health and safety needs created by the pandemic, as documented by survey results and other available data documenting real-time impact. Consider the impacts of funding:

- Backbone organizations that support a critical community infrastructure (e.g. food access)
- Neighborhood-based and grassroots organizations that are responding to the unique needs of vulnerable and/or isolated populations
- Culturally-based organizations that are trusted by unique populations to provide critical services
- Faith-based organizations with a history of providing critical services in community

Fund into the **gaps** between the public sector response and frontline needs. This may mean:

- exploring with an organization the opportunities for them to access other funding sources
- exploring opportunities to ensure that emergency rules (e.g. moratorium on evictions) are being enforced
- maximizing impact by taking advantage of the **speed** with which these funds can be deployed and the inherent **flexibility** in their use by agencies.