

March 17, 2020

An Open Letter to the Chicago Region's Nonprofit Community | COVID-19

Dear Partners and Friends,

As the Chicago region grapples with unprecedented challenges presented by COVID-19, we are grateful for your ongoing work to provide essential public services, tackle inequities, and create communities where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

We can't imagine a more difficult time for Chicago area nonprofits. Many vital programs are being disrupted at a time when people need them more, daily operations altered, and budgets stretched by increased demand for services and the cancellation of revenue-generating events – all in a context of tremendous and extraordinary uncertainty. The challenges are even greater for those providing direct services to people at the highest risk due to the virus itself and the economic impacts we are already seeing.

Like you, this community is at the heart of everything we care about. In these anxious times, we want to reaffirm our commitment to you and your work. Your priorities may be shifting as you determine how best to provide for communities, and the path to meet your original program goals may no longer be clear. While we know you remain deeply committed to continuing your work, we also realize that during this crisis it may not be realistic to meet the project goals you once expected to achieve. Please know, we understand and will prioritize flexibility regarding reporting.

In recognition of the challenges you are facing now and those that will be posed to our region in the days and weeks ahead, many of us have joined together and with others to contribute to a fund as one way to support those impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.

The Chicago Community COVID-19 Response Fund will provide flexible resources to community-based organizations across the Metropolitan Chicago region to supply essential aid to the individuals and households who are most impacted by the pandemic. Those resources currently include access to emergency food and basic supplies, rent and mortgage assistance and utility assistance. Learn more at <https://www.chicagocovid19responsefund.org/>.

We will continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 in our community by listening to you to understand your experience and the experiences of those you serve. We are heartened by the way organizations across our region are rising to this challenge and are committed to doing our part to help ensure this critical work continues.

Thank you for your leadership and partnership in helping our city weather this crisis.

Sincerely,

Iris Krieg, Executive Director
Albert Pick, Jr. Fund

Joel M. Friedman, President
The Alvin H. Baum Family Fund

Helene D. Gayle, President and Chief Executive Officer
The Chicago Community Trust

Adam Levine, President
Circle of Service Foundation

Mary Pounder, Program Director

Comer Family Foundation

Greg DiDomenico, President and CEO
Community Memorial Foundation

Leslie Ramyk, Executive Director
Conant Family Foundation

Evan Hochberg, President
Crown Family Philanthropies

Arne Duncan, Managing Partner
Emerson Collective / Chicago CRED

Angelique Power, President
The Field Foundation

Rachel Garbow Monroe, President and CEO
The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation

Maria Socorro Pesqueira, President
Healthy Communities Foundation

Phyllis Glink, Executive Director
The Irving Harris Foundation

Janet Froetscher, President
JB and MK Pritzker Family Foundation

Lonnie Nasatir, President
Jewish United Fund

John Palfrey, President
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Ellen S. Alberding, President
The Joyce Foundation

Liz Kramer Lefkofsky, Executive Director
Lefkofsky Family Foundation

Craig Leva, President
Leva Family Foundation

Unmi Song, President
Lloyd A. Fry Foundation

Kelsey Malnati Howell, Executive Director
Marc and Jeanne Malnati Family Foundation

Allyson Park, President
Mars Wrigley Foundation

Gayla Brockman, President and CEO
Michael Reese Health Trust

Kim R. Van Horn, Managing Director
Paul M. Angell Family Foundation

Gillian Darlow, CEO
Polk Bros. Foundation

Charles Twichell, Executive Director
Prince Charitable Trusts

Julie Wilen, Executive Director
Pritzker Pucker Family Foundation
Pritzker Foundation

Cindy Moelis, President
Pritzker Traubert Foundation

David Hiller, President and CEO
Robert R. McCormick Foundation

Na'ilah Suad Nasir, President
Spencer Foundation

Patricia Ford, Executive Director
Steans Family Foundation

Sean Garrett, President and CEO
United Way of Metro Chicago

Robert N. DiLeonardi, Executive Director
VNA Foundation

Michelle Morales, President
Woods Fund Chicago