



March 12, 2020

Dear Funders and Philanthropists,

You are needed more than ever during this time of coronavirus. Your rapid response can save countless lives. Please consult with nonprofit leaders, though, to ensure that your funding goes to the highest and best use. I am sure many of you saw the [recent article in the Chronicle of Philanthropy](#) which mirrors a number of our concerns and requests. Here's what Oregon nonprofit leaders want you to know:

1. **Be flexible about how current funding is spent.** This pandemic is a potential game-changer, and our work in the community will have to change as well. If we have funding to provide school-based interventions, but the schools are closed, will we be penalized if we redeploy our staff to serve families in new, different ways that haven't yet been approved in your annual grant cycle? If we have funding to do in-person community education events, but we have to shift to virtual events, do we have to renegotiate our contract? Issue a statement to grantees that you will support nonprofits leading in an adaptive ways and you will support their efforts to be responsive to changing community needs, even if it doesn't match to original proposal.
2. **Distribute more money.** In a time of crisis, doesn't it make sense to invest more early on? If we can slow the spread of this disease, it will save countless dollars later in healthcare costs and economic losses. We as nonprofits are being asked to do more, so give us more resources to get the job done. We know the stock market is down and you all may be worried about your corpus. We look to you for your leadership, including leadership giving.
3. **We need more funding and we need it immediately.** In spite of being stretched, we are actively responding to this crisis, crafting new policies and action plans, deep cleaning our facilities, educating the people we serve, fighting bigotry, etc. Should we stop doing those things to research your guidelines, create a program plan and budget, and write a grant proposal? Will that help "flatten the curve"? Don't you have trusted partners you can provide additional unrestricted funding to *right now*?
4. **Many of us are maxed out.** We've been operating at our maximum capacity for years already. Our support systems and for some, even our funding levels haven't yet recovered from years of cut backs in government programs. We already have eight other special projects that we've piled on top of our regular work. We will rise to the occasion but we need your support.

5. **We especially need your funding, because some of us just had to cancel our biggest fundraising event of the year.** We lost our deposit on the hotel ballroom and catering, and we aren't sure how we will make budget. You are expressing concern about economic losses for hourly and contract workers, but you should also worry about the viability of many nonprofits—this could put some of us out of business.
6. **Support intermediary organizations.** Our coalitions, associations and capacity building partners are offering real-time guidance and support. They are convening us so that we can coordinate our efforts and share effective strategies. Help them help us.

We are pretty busy at the moment, but we still would like to share our ideas with you as you decide on your response.

Please, nothing about us without us!

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim White". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Jim White
Executive Director