March 25, 2020

Governor Gary R. Herbert
350 North State Street, Suite 200
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-2220

Lt. Governor Spencer J. Cox
350 North State Street, Suite 220
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-2325

RE: COVID-19, Novel Coronavirus Response

Dear Governor Herbert and Lt. Governor Cox,

Considering the continued spread of COVID-19 across the country and here in Utah, the Utah Nonprofits Association (UNA) wants to offer both of you and the state our help. Having a unique relationship with Utah’s nonprofit community, we are able to use our resources to communicate quickly with nonprofits, distribute information, call them to action, and be a voice for the nonprofit community on task forces and committees, if necessary.

COVID-19 knows no boundaries and is affecting nonprofits in Utah through the following ways:

- Nonprofits, particularly service providers, are being called on to adapt quickly to new operating requirements, educate community members, and support vulnerable community members without any new resources.
- Nonprofits tend to be under-resourced and under-staffed in the best of times. A drop-off in staff and volunteers due to illness, vulnerability to illness, kid’s home from school, etc., will pose threats to program continuity.
- Many nonprofits may suffer significant financial losses due to cancelled fundraising events, performances, conferences and other programs. Like small businesses, nonprofits need help recovering economically.

In some cases, several factors will combine to create difficult challenges. For example, food banks will be more needed than ever, yet they tend to rely heavily on volunteers, many of whom are senior citizens and may be unable to volunteer at this time for safety reasons.

My team recently conducted a survey of 301 nonprofits in the state, in which we asked what the impact of COVID-19 will be on their organizations. The following are some of the results:

1. 75% of respondents said COVID-19 will have a highly negative impact on operations, programs, and services
2. 89.7% of respondents said they were cutting programming in response to the COVID-19 health crisis
3. Only 21.4% of respondents said their organizations have nine months or more in reserves. 59.2% said they have less than six months in reserves
4. One survey respondent noted that donations have fallen to zero since the crisis began and another said corporate sponsors have less to give at this crucial time when nonprofits need funding
5. Many nonprofits with staff are concerned with cutting their staff or have already cut staff. 78,000 Utahns (6.7%) are employed by the sector, leaving an already short-staffed sector even worse off
6. Some nonprofits are seeing a spike for their services, straining an under-resourced sector
With the above in mind, I urge you to make emergency economic relief available to nonprofits, immediately. In some states, like Massachusetts, they have set aside state money for low to zero interest loans for small businesses, including nonprofits. We suggest the state take a similar approach.

Lastly, I strongly suggest the State consult with nonprofit leaders as Utah continues to proactively respond to this crisis. Nonprofit leaders have great insights from their work on the frontlines. Again, please inform us on how we can help the state or if you need me to connect you with leaders who can advise your efforts.

Best Regards,

Kate Rubalcava, M.Ed.
Chief Executive Officer
Utah Nonprofits Association