



April 30, 2021

County of Riverside Board of Supervisors:

First, we want to thank you for your leadership in passing the proposed allocations from the American Rescue Plan, which included \$20 million for our nonprofit sector. This builds on earlier CARES Act nonprofit support that the Board provided - which reached hundreds of organizations in all Districts.

In the midst of the pandemic, our community has further understood the importance of partnership and collaboration within the nonprofit sector. From sharing resources to sharing data, nonprofits have come together in the interest of delivering critical services and supplies to the region of nearly 5 million residents. The sector's partnership with its local government bodies has been unprecedented. It is that growing partnership that we seek to pursue, and to ensure that innovative practices, which have stretched as far as financial resources have permitted, can continue.

As we emerge from COVID, the nonprofit sector is excited to partner with its County leaders to build a targeted investment strategy that reaches our diverse communities and solves critical problems. Several key nonprofit leaders have been meeting regularly to understand the effects of COVID on our sector and propose how we can emerge stronger than before.

The challenges that face our region are not new, but they have been further exacerbated in large part to the COVID-19 pandemic, as you know. In order to address the disparities in 2020, particularly those significantly impacting our communities of color, the nonprofit sector collaborated and partnered with County, public health, cities, and other frontline colleagues to address the COVID crisis. Some highlights include:

- **Senior Nutrition:** Services were expanded in both Riverside and San Bernardino Counties in response to the demand for meals as the need had doubled since the beginning of the pandemic.
- **Child Nutrition & Developmental Services:** Essential meal programs were expanded to include "grab n go" meals, grocery and meal giveaways. Simultaneously, developmental curriculum, social, learning opportunities, and parent support were provided in order to enhance the children's learning and experience safely at home.
- **Behavioral and Mental Health:** Behavioral and mental health services continued and include case management, parenting classes and therapy by quickly shifting to telehealth.
- **Housing & Homelessness:** Rental assistance programs, emergency housing assistance, and community education were provided in partnership with local and regional governments and nonprofits. Efforts also included collaboration around nutrition services, legal immigration services, and other immediate needs.

The nonprofit sector truly believes that in order to capitalize on the moment, we must look to invest in, and grow, these public-private partnerships. In short, in order to maintain the infrastructure the pandemic helped build, the nonprofit sector asks that we be included in co-designing the investment and



dissemination of funds from the American Rescue Plan. Such inclusion would allow nonprofits to be thought partners and force-multipliers. We believe that the evidence during the pandemic shows that nonprofits, if given the opportunity, do significantly contribute to the economic recovery of residents and businesses in the region.

For these reasons, we propose that the County of Riverside support and invest in the long-term viability of the following areas, by building lasting systems for collaboration between nonprofits and government. The following categories are areas where the nonprofit sector is already working collaboratively and with a lens of racial, gender, and economic equity. More investment will only increase positive results:

- Childcare & Early Childhood Education
- Homelessness & Housing Security
- Public Health
- Disaster Resilience
- Youth/Foster Youth Programming
- Mental and Behavioral Health
- Probation & Alternate Strategies
- Workforce Development

To help the nonprofit sector work with its government partners, we have developed a set of recommendations for your consideration. The framing of these recommendations looks to help the nonprofit sector thrive in our region, not merely survive. They focus on nonprofits of all sizes building stronger relationships with local businesses and government, helping these sectors reach grassroots and diverse communities across the Inland Empire and Riverside County. These recommendations can be found in Appendix A.

We hope that nonprofits can count on your continued leadership and support. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Julian Cuevas, Director of Policy & Governmental Affairs at the Inland Empire Community Foundation at jcuevas@iegives.org.

Respectfully,

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TITLE
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Appendix A

ECONOMIC RECOVERY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE INLAND EMPIRE NONPROFIT SECTOR 2021

A group of regionally-serving nonprofit leaders have been meeting weekly during the pandemic to expeditiously address human service needs. We respectfully submit the following actions the County of Riverside should take to ensure that local nonprofit organizations continue to contribute to the economic recovery of residents and businesses of the region. To survive COVID-19, we need to begin discussing regulatory reform, new business approaches, and expanded public contracting and ways beyond grant funding that will support our nonprofit businesses to dramatically improve our communities and increase the likelihood of more racial and economic justice coming out of this crisis. Thank you for your consideration and your willingness to discuss these ideas and identify pathways forward in partnership.

- 1) **Reform the reimbursement only payment system to meet community needs.**
 - Provide 20% of funding for all reimbursable contracts up front;
 - Where eligible, allow nonprofits the indirect rates they have negotiated for federal contracts; Allow nonprofits the indirect rates they have negotiated for federal contracts. If an agency does not have a federally negotiated rate, determine an appropriate rate in collaboration with the grantee;
 - Establish and commit to implementing a guaranteed reimbursement timeline, so that nonprofit contracts are paid in a timely way to reduce stress and instability in the nonprofit;
 - Create annual listening sessions to receive and discuss feedback on operational and strategic issues between and with County and Nonprofit contractors;
 - Set up an onboarding, mentoring practice between mature nonprofits receiving county contracts and new nonprofits receiving contracts.

- 2) **Increase local preference points and update the definition of “local” nonprofit, in partnership with nonprofit partners.**
 - Increase the number of points for a current presence in the county;
 - Add points for a majority of the organization’s Board members in the county;
 - Add points for having headquarters in the county.
 - Add points for having a diverse, representative board with BIPOC representation at least meeting County demographics.



- 3) **Work with nonprofits to have access to unused county property**
 - Support the co-location of nonprofits in vacated office spaces where county programs still operate;
 - Offer vacant county properties to nonprofits at below-market lease rates or sale - especially to expand childcare and youth programming during COVID;
 - Offer underutilized vehicles or other equipment to extend nonprofit operational capacity.

- 4) **Allow for advocacy**
 - Include language in county contracts that nonprofit contractors will not be penalized or retaliated against for advocacy on behalf of their clients, their mission, and social justice issues.

- 5) **Create a disaster network & Shelter In Place Fund**
 - Fund and undertake a disaster planning process with multiple nonprofit sectors to more effectively and with greater coordination respond to different disasters;
 - Effectively fund and utilize the IE’s Nonprofit Infrastructure to provide and distribute services;
 - Support the creation of master databases and GIS mapping of services to meet gaps;
 - Establish a rainy day fund that can support nonprofit providers during a crisis to maintain flows of services.
 - Support the continuation of civic infrastructure built through Census Outreach for use in other emergency situations (Vaccine Outreach and Education, etc.).

- 6) **Enhance nonprofit resiliency and capacity building support.**
 - Ensure coordinated technical support and capacity building to cohorts of similar organizations: Those providing the same type of services and/or serving the same clientele with differing services have access to nonprofit resilience strategies;
 - Ensure coordinated technical support and capacity building to cohorts by location: High Desert, Coachella Valley, etc.

- 7) **Support Professionalism and Human Resources in the Nonprofit Sector**
 - Create an HR Hotline for small businesses and nonprofits that is staffed with HR attorneys rather than specialists that sometimes are not as knowledgeable as attorneys on crucial COVID and other HR issues.



- 8) **Advance Racial, Gender, and Economic Equity for the Inland Empire**
 - Engage the Government Alliance on Race and Equity entity and begin the assessment process using GARE principles to fully embed racial equity across county departments, policies, and systems;
 - Undertake annual listening sessions on racial equity practices for county departments and programs with nonprofits.

- 9) **Build a Permanent Relationship between the Nonprofit Sector and Counties.**
 - Create a nonprofit liaison office, similar to those for profit business community.