

Help for the Helpers: *Resource for Responding to Community Needs*

"I do not mistrust the future; I do not fear what is ahead. For our problems are large, but our heart is larger." - George H.W. Bush, 41st President of the United States of America.

When our citizens and communities are facing challenges, one of our greatest interests and opportunities is to be helpful to the helpers. Right now, healthcare workers, teachers, first responders, grocery store employees, postal workers, nonprofit leaders, food pantries workers, and many others are sacrificing their personal safety to better humanity. It is our time to put forward our larger hearts to provide support and resources to help the helpers doing so much during this unprecedented health crisis gripping our country.

Strategic partnerships across all sectors business, nonprofits, philanthropy, and government are critical now more than ever. As corporate, community, and philanthropy leaders, now is a time to step up your support of the nonprofit organizations, schools, public safety, and individuals who are still *doing* despite declining revenue and volunteer resources. The following highlights a variety of options and actionable items to help those on the front lines to respond to growing needs at all levels:

Investing in Frontline Nonprofits:

- Make a **general operating/support grant** to the current nonprofits that you, your company, and/or foundation currently support. They are in significant need of general operating support right now!
- If you want to have a broader community impact on multiple organizations and needs, support one of the many **emergency/relief funds** created through credible nonprofits (community foundations, United Ways, and other nonprofits). You can find a list by geographic service region [HERE](#) (*tracking by National Center for Family Philanthropy*)
- If your nonprofit or charity of choice has postponed or cancelled their fundraising event this spring, consider **making your sponsorship and donate 100%** to the nonprofits' general needs. While many events are canceled or postponed, the need will continue and your support will be appreciated as they are responding to a tremendous growth of new service needs.
- Check into the needs of your state's nonprofit organizations by connecting with your **state Nonprofit Association** via the National Council of Nonprofits website found [HERE](#)

[Securing Best Philanthropy & Corporate Responsibility Practices:](#)

- If your company, foundation, or individual donors are trying to determine where the current philanthropic needs are, partner with your local or state Philanthropy Serving Organization (PSO). Each has dedicated resources, tools, and partnerships to enhance your giving. Find your PSO [HERE](#).
- An excellent resource to support companies, foundations, private donors, and other funders to navigate disasters is the Center for Disaster Philanthropy's Disaster Philanthropy Playbook. This has helpful sample tools, practices, and resources which you can check out [HERE](#).

[Volunteer Assistance in the age of COVID:](#)

- If your company or foundation is looking at ways to contribute, volunteer labor either in-person (small groups of five or less that can be properly physically distanced) or virtually. Check into your state's **Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD)** [HERE](#).
- Another great partner and resource for volunteering is the **Corporation for National Service's resource page** and your state's council/commission for national and community service. Check these resources out [HERE](#).
- If you and your staff have extra time while working remotely, many nonprofits are in need of extra "hands" - **volunteers** to support aspects of their work such as social media and marketing assistance, sending donor acknowledgements, or locating high-demand supplies (e.g., PPE). Contact your nonprofit partners to see what extra support they might need beyond donations.

[Supporting Hunger Needs:](#)

- **Food banks and pantries** are experiencing a 70 to 100% growth in need of their services and food supplies for young and old alike due to the crisis. You, your company, and/or foundation can make charitable donations or volunteer to help stock boxes by finding your region and/or state's food banks. Check out Feeding America's "find your local food bank" tool [HERE](#).

[Supporting First Responders:](#)

- Many **EMS, fire department, policy, and other front line** workers do not have proper protective equipment (PPE) especially N95 masks. If your company has N95 masks or respirators available, please donate those to your first responders.
- Support a local restaurant by ordering takeout/curbside catering to be delivered to your **community's first responders** offices/locations (fire departments, police departments, ambulance stations, hospital, healthcare center, etc).

- Partner with a local **Makerspace or Innovation centers** that have 3D printers by donating materials, supplies, and/or cash so that they can produce face masks, face shields, or other PPE.

Supporting Students & Educators:

- With schools closed and teachers navigating the world of **remote teaching**, **supplies for students** are in greater demand now more than ever. One great partner to help get supplies to needy students and ensure quality education through distance learning is DonorsChoose. Check for details [HERE](#).
- Provide immediate support for **educators, learners, and nonprofits** providing education support for your community by checking out Grantmakers for Education resources [HERE](#).
- During COVID-19, children who are dealing with domestic violence in their home are not finding their normal assistance through local schools and teachers. If you, your company, and/or foundation wishes to protect children who may be in an unsafe home situation, find your state or local **Child Advocacy Center** or statewide network [HERE](#).
- Local **childcare and early childhood education centers** are struggling to find critical cleaning, sterilization, food, and general supplies for the children in their care, especially those caring for children of front line workers. Consider donating any extra resources or helping acquire essential supplies and materials for these centers. Please contact your local childcare (private and public) providers to determine what they specifically need.

Supporting Small Businesses:

- As **small businesses** are grappling with non-essential business closures, they are all looking for bridge funding or low-interest/forgivable loans to survive. A great partner for supporting small businesses through your foundation's grantmaking and/or company's corporate responsibility giving is a **Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)**. You, your company, and/or foundation can make donations/grants to a CDFI in your region or state by using the Opportunity Network's locator [HERE](#).
- **Restaurants** are also struggling, so now is a time to invest in those that are still offering delivery/pick-up service. You can double your impact by supporting local businesses *and* frontline healthcare workers by donating to local hospital and healthcare foundations who can then buy meals from local restaurants for delivery to hospitals.

Supporting Healthcare & Senior Services:

- Supporting your **local hospital and healthcare centers** is critical, and the needs can vary based on the location and the number of COVID-19 cases in your

community. Donations of PPE supplies are much needed. Check with your local hospital to see what specific items may be in especially high demand.

- Due to the shifting of general medical needs from hospitals to other care centers during the pandemic **Free and Charitable Clinics** are seeing 60% and higher increase in the need of their services. This includes needing supplies of PPE, medications, and general medical supplies. Find your local free and/or charitable clinic at this searchable list via the national association which can be found [HERE](#)
- **Senior care centers** such as senior services, retirement communities, nursing homes, in-home senior services, etc. do not have ready available supplies of PPE and care for their employees. Assistance is needed for supplying PPE, cleaning supplies, and other resources please contact your local senior service, retirement communities, and nursing homes to assist with supplies and other needs.

These resources are provided to assist partners to support the growing needs due to the pandemic. Of course, it is recommended that your company and/or foundation does its due diligence to ensure these options are the right fit for your giving and support. We are in this together for it requires righteous might and generosity that will guarantee our collective absolute victory over the pandemic.

In closing, the words of former President George H.W. Bush were never more timely:

"We must act on what we know. I take as my guide the hope of a saint: In crucial things, unity; in important things, diversity; in all things, generosity."

Source references: Center for Disaster Philanthropy, Corporation for National Service, DonorsChoose, Feeding America, Grantmakers for Education, National Association of Free & Charitable Clinics, National Center for Family Philanthropy, National Children's Advocacy Center, National Council of Nonprofits, National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD), Opportunity Network, Philanthropy West Virginia, and United Philanthropy Forum

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