



Proposal for Providing Critical Services through a SC CARES Community Relief Program

Good Afternoon, I am Benjamin Bullock, Director of Operations at Together SC, South Carolina's statewide network focused on uniting, strengthening, and advancing the state's charitable nonprofit and philanthropic community. Together SC leads through education, advocacy, and collaboration. We represent over 800 organizations that labor in every county and legislative district of this State, including some of the others speaking to you today.

In these extraordinary times, charitable nonprofits serve as crucial partners with state and local governments, building and supporting communities in ways and in places governments cannot reach, enhancing the impact of government efforts, without expanding government itself. However, this pandemic has put many organizations at risk of drastically reducing services, or worse yet, many may have to close their doors, because of lost revenue and the other adverse impacts from the Covid-19 Pandemic. If South Carolina's crucial, front-line community organizations fail, that enhanced impact is dramatically weakened.

The [FAQs](#) for the Coronavirus Relief Fund state explicitly that nonprofits may be used to assist the distribution of CRF payments, clarifying for state governments that nonprofits are critical allies for relief and recovery. We are asking you to consider designating an appropriate sum, perhaps \$25 million, directed to a SC Community Relief Fund to enable registered 501(C)3 organizations based in South Carolina to partner with agencies and for-profit businesses to fill in the gaps to provide approved programs and services to care for those impacted by the virus.

Last May, 80 percent of nonprofit respondents to a SC Community Loan Fund survey reported that "without additional funds they faced closure by September." Fortunately, 2,500 nonprofits received the Federal PPP loans helping to preserve through the spring and summer over 53,000

jobs. (That represents 8% of all jobs saved in SC, yet nonprofits received only 4% of the loans made and 6% of dollars lent.)

But more than relief for their bottom lines, nonprofits seek to actively collaborate in the ongoing recovery. Because they are trusted partners in underserved communities in every corner of the state, nonprofits are obvious vehicles for COVID recovery outreach. And there are solid statistics showing how funding for services through nonprofits delivers results on the frontlines at reduced costs to the State. In short, the ability to leverage other funds and to utilize volunteers means nonprofits deliver a big “bang for the buck.”

Already, SC’s philanthropic community has raised a collective \$11.2 million for COVID relief. The One SC Fund raised and granted out \$3 million to support immediate needs. Local and regional funds have provided more than \$8 million. And with programs such as broadband expansion, community nonprofits are essential players in educating and reaching underserved communities because they have the credibility to bring service “in the door” once access has been delivered.

The Governor Bill Lee of Tennessee recently announced [\\$150 million in relief fund for nonprofits](#). Last week, Governor Jane Mills of Maine announced a CRF [Maine Economic Recovery Grant Program](#) of \$200 million to support businesses and nonprofits grappling with economic hardships caused by COVID-19. Additional examples may be found on the [National Conference of State Legislatures website](#).

We thank you for this opportunity to suggest ideas and we look forward to working with you and Committee staff to provide more details. We believe the world will be a better place when all people work together for good so we are here to serve through this pandemic as your “allies for good.”