

Congressman Ben Ray Luján

Senator Tom Udall

Congresswoman Debra Haaland

Senator Martin Heinrich

Congresswoman Xochitl Torres Small

April 16, 2020

Representatives Luján, Haaland, Torres Small, and Senators Udall and Heinrich,

The nonprofit community sincerely appreciates how responsive the Congress, and particularly the New Mexico Delegation has been during this crisis. You have approved mechanisms to help employers preserve jobs, to assist those who nevertheless are becoming jobless, and to distribute short term cash assistance to some families. With new legislation being prepared, it's important to face problems already arising in implementing these efforts, and to expand and extend many that were truly quick 'stop gaps' in nature.

But Covid-19, and even our best response efforts, are dramatically highlighting and exacerbating the damage and harm of the serious racial and social inequities in our nation. Lack of access to regular health care has compounded the pandemic for minorities and people living in poverty. The 'digital divide' denies people living in poverty and many in rural areas vital information about the pandemic, access to online portals for financial assistance and unemployment filing, ability to find resources for food or shelter, even the opportunity for school children to socialize or participate in online classrooms. Lack of internet access is also hampering New Mexico's response to the 2020 Census.

While we fight the direct effects of Covid-19, we must recognize how the lack of diversity, equity and inclusiveness in policy-making (New Mexico Delegates being the exception) has increased our vulnerability to the health and economic miseries of the pandemic. Without immediate attention and commitment of resources it will continue to impede our efforts to recover and move forward as a nation.

On the frontlines, we need more support in direct ongoing funding for these problems, and immediate fiscal assistance to nonprofits providing our safety net. Just as important is much stronger assistance to state budgets that provide both infrastructure and critical funding for this work across the country. As tax revenues evaporate, without significantly greater support, unavoidable cuts in state and local budgets will offset much of the federal relief effort for people and communities in need.

During the past two weeks, New Mexico Thrives and our partners at the national level have heard from many nonprofits about several modifications to provisions in the CARES Act that would help nonprofit organizations recover from the economic challenges stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. A unified group of major national organizations has put together a set of recommendations (attached) for modifications to the CARES Act that will help preserve nonprofits' ability to provide essential services at this time of greatest need. New Mexico Thrives and the undersigned New Mexico nonprofits support these recommendations, and we seek your assistance in ensuring that they are included in the fourth COVID-19 stimulus bill that Congress passes. Specifically, nonprofits need the following four modifications to the CARES Act:

1. Expanding nonprofits' access to credit to provide for immediate financial relief by expanding nonprofit eligibility for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and by establishing a dedicated funding stream for PPP loans to nonprofit organizations.
2. Strengthening temporary above-the-line charitable deduction from the CARES Act by allowing taxpayers to use it on the 2019 taxes, significantly increasing the \$300 cap, and extending it beyond 2020.
3. Holding harmless self-insured nonprofits by providing funding to cover 100% of the costs of these organizations' unemployment claims. Without this change, many nonprofits that provide health care, food assistance, affordable housing, childcare, and other critical services will have to end or curtail services later this year.
4. Increase emergency funding so that nonprofits can work with state and local governments to provide essential services to vulnerable families and frontline responders to the COVID-19 crisis.

New Mexico needs a three-month extension to complete the 2020 Census and additional staff to assist with telephone response. COVID-19 has made it more difficult for people to self-respond. Many have no internet access, some have reported not being able to get through on the phone.

Thank you for your continued leadership during this crisis. The CARES Act was an important first step in helping nonprofits recover from the COVID-19 crisis. We hope you and your colleagues in Congress can make these important modifications to help nonprofits continue to provide essential services in our communities. In addition, we hope you will find ways to help all people in our communities.

Sincerely,

Adelante Development Center
 All Faiths
 American Lung Association in New Mexico
 Americans for Indian Opportunity
 Ariel Investigations
 Building Beloved Communities
 Center for Civic Policy
 Center for Health Innovation
 Center for Nonprofit Excellence, United Way of
 Central New Mexico
 Children's Grief Center of New Mexico
 Children's Reading Alliance
 Common Cause New Mexico
 Community Against Violence
 Connections Coaching
 Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions
 Equal Access to Justice
 Fayette Street Academy
 Girls Inc. of Santa Fe
 Greater Albuquerque Habitat for Humanity

Jewish Federation of New Mexico
 La Plaza de Encuentro Gathering Place
 La Semilla Food Center
 Loving Thunder Therapeutic Riding
 Native Health Initiative
 New Mexico Association of Grantmakers
 New Mexico Thrives
 Organizers in the Land of Enchantment (OLÉ)
 Pivot Evaluation
 Prosperity Works
 Rape Crisis Center of Central New Mexico
 Roadrunner Food Bank
 Storyspinning
 Teeniors
 The Grants Collective
 United Way of Eddy County
 Valencia Community Action Network
 Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and
 Storytellers