COVID-19:
WHAT NONPROFITS NEED TO KNOW

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Washington Nonprofits
COVID-19

- Our understanding is evolving rapidly
- Long incubation period + mild symptoms for some = spreading
- Dangerous for elders, people with compromised health
WHAT WE NEED TO DO

WE MAKE SURE NONPROFITS HAVE WHAT THEY NEED TO SUCCEED.
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WHAT WILL IT MEAN TO US

- Our lives will be changed

- A lot is at stake, and we are not affected equally
  - Convenience
  - Livelihoods
  - Lives

- We must work in new ways

- We will get through it together
IMPACTS IN KING COUNTY NOW

- Arts events and performances cancelled
- No visitors at nursing homes and retirement communities
- Hospitals strained—staff working overtime, low supplies, etc.
- Schools, libraries, museums, zoo = closed
- Non-urgent healthcare is deferred
- Non-essential events and all large gatherings are cancelled
- Some small businesses and restaurants are closing
- Stores sold out of relevant supplies
- No more food samples at Costco!
HOW WE NAVIGATE THIS CRISIS

WE MAKE SURE NONPROFITS HAVE WHAT THEY NEED TO SUCCEED.
NONPROFITS HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE TO PLAY

- Care providers
- Social justice advocates
- Trusted messengers
- Community builders and conveners
- Artists/inspiration
- Avenues for people to contribute
ADAPTATION IS REQUIRED

- New ways of working together
  - Avoid in-person meetings and events
  - Work remotely if/when you can
  - Institute new sanitation procedures

- New behavioral norms
  - Hand washing
  - Not touching you face
  - Physical distancing
  - Cleaning frequently-touched surfaces
THIS AFFECTS OUR PERSONAL LIVES AS WELL

- Social distancing is changing our daily routines and taking away many of the usual ways we care for ourselves and others
- The requirement to work in new ways may make us feel incompetent
- We may have fears and concerns for ourselves or loved ones
- It is hard to plan for the future
ADAPTATION IS HARD

- We are wired to resist change
- Many of us are in denial about the need for dramatic change
- Clear direction from trusted leaders is lacking
- Response requires shifting from individualism to recognition of our interdependence
- It is hard to give up privileges and convenience
- We are experiencing big emotions—fear, anxiety, grief, uncertainty
OVERVIEW OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Employment policies and practices
- Working together in new ways
- Program continuity
- Contingency planning
- Event cancellation & alternatives
- Financial impact
- Communication with funders
YOUR STAFF TEAM & EMPLOYMENT POLICIES

- Workplace policies – guidance about:
  - Whether to come to work
  - How to behave at work
  - Sick leave
  - Remote work

- How are team members doing?
  - Are your staff members or their family members vulnerable?
  - How are people handling the stress?
  - Who is affected by school closures?
  - Do people trust each other?
  - Have you let people know you care about their welfare?
WORKING REMOTELY

- Technology to support remote work
  - Secure access to organizational files, database, etc.
  - Laptops
  - Videoconferencing

- Board and committee meetings
  - Technology for virtual meetings
  - Training to use technology
  - Facilitation skills for virtual meetings
PROGRAM CONTINUITY

- Which programs are essential and feasible to continue?
- How will you maintain essential services if...
  - ...some staff are out sick
  - ...volunteers are unable to serve
  - ...there are new requirements for safety (e.g. enhanced cleaning)
- If some aspects of your operations close temporarily, how can you retain staff?
- What additional costs will you incur?
CONTINGENCY PLANNING

- Changes to service provision, customer service, etc.
- Are there certain events that will trigger changes to your operations?
- How might demand for your services change?
- Do you serve vulnerable populations? How are they affected?
- Are there new ways you might serve?
EVENT CANCELLATION

- What events do you have to cancel?
  - Program-related
  - Fundraising

- What are you planning to do?
  - Postpone
  - Cancel
  - Substitute a virtual event or online fundraising campaign

- Communicate about your plan with relevant stakeholders
FINANCIAL IMPACTS

- What new costs do you have to continue your work and enhance safety?
- What are the financial implications of cancelling events (lost revenue, cancellation costs)?
- Are there new activities you wish to consider in response to the crisis?
- Will your ability to provide services be impacted? Does this jeopardize funding?
COMMUNICATION/NEGOTIATION WITH FUNDERS

- Ability to meet contractual obligations
- How does your strategy need to change?
- Will your service levels/goals be affected?
- Will you have additional costs to deliver services?
CASE STUDY: PIERCE COUNTY AIDS FOUNDATION

WE MAKE SURE NONPROFITS HAVE WHAT THEY NEED TO SUCCEED.
THE NEED FOR ADVOCACY

- Nonprofit work is often invisible or taken for granted
- Some public officials think that nonprofits are adequately funded by private philanthropy
- Many do not realize that nonprofits make up 10% of the workforce.
- Our capacity to help and our community knowledge may not be recognized or leveraged.
KEY MESSAGES FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

- Share
  - How your work is affected by the pandemic.
  - How you are continuing to serve the community/why your work is vital to getting through this crisis.
  - What economic losses you predict

- Ask them to
  - Include nonprofits in any relief and recovery funding that is available in our state.
  - Be flexible regarding how government funding is used by nonprofits.
  - Consult with nonprofit leaders on the front lines
LEADERSHIP

- Don’t panic
- Provide reassurance
- Be kind and support people caring for each other
- Don’t assume that people are in agreement
- Communicate frequently and broadly
- Be nimble and flexible
TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

- Look for silver linings
- Spend time with loved ones or phone a friend
- Go outdoors
- Sleep
- Meetup with colleagues virtually
- Learn something new
- Think/reflect
OUR DEEP PURPOSE

The world today is a scarier, more uncertain place than usual. Quarantines, economic instability, and political strife seem to be the new normal. Never before has the work of community-led nonprofits—promoting grassroots leadership, lifting up women’s voices, providing access to the underserved, and otherwise creating resiliency—been more critical to creating a just, healthy, and equitable society. And while corona concerns have us steering clear of one another, our collective work is a lynchpin that brings us closer together.

- Darius Rodriguez Heyman, Blue Avocado