March 19, 2020

Governor Mark Gordon
Wyoming State Capitol
200 West 24th Street
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Dear Governor Gordon,

The Wyoming Nonprofit Network appreciates your leadership and response to the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in our state. Our mission is to represent the collective voice of the charitable nonprofit sector and bring best practices, resources and support to the nonprofit community.

We are in communication with nonprofits across the state daily, and we offer some insights for your consideration:

- Many of them are on the front lines of this crisis, quickly adapting internal operations and adjusting delivery of services for Wyoming’s most vulnerable people in communities across the state. The needs for these services will dramatically increase as the situation continues.
- Nonprofits tend to be under-resourced and under-staffed in the best of times. Declines in staff and volunteers due to illness, vulnerability to illness, children home from school, etc., pose threats to program continuity.
- We rely on nonprofits to fill significant gaps in Wyoming, and they do so by leveraging resources in a way that makes them highly efficient. Even so, they will be facing daunting resource challenges due to event cancellations, lower service revenue, decreased volunteerism, and declines in the stock market which will impact donor giving.
- There are 3,700 charitable nonprofits in Wyoming with more than 15,000 employees. They protect, feed, heal, shelter, educate, and nurture our bodies and souls while investing significant financial and human resources in our communities. Their positive contributions to our economy are often overlooked. They employ people, pay rent, and purchase goods and services. They also bolster economic activity through the provision of cultural events and amenities. Like small businesses, nonprofits will need help to recover economically.

Wyoming Nonprofit Network

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In light of the creation of five coronavirus task forces and in consideration of the size and contributions of the nonprofit sector, we respectfully ask that you consider adding a task force specific to nonprofits. Our primary reasons for this request include the following.

- It is important the nonprofit sector be included in conversations about the economic impact we can expect to weather and to identify innovative strategies to recover. One component to a strategy, which we have already been working on for the past year, is WyoGives. This online giving day takes place July 15, 2020 (WyoGives.org).
- We can work together to identify and mobilize necessary trainings and resources for the sector.
- Nonprofit sector leaders will have an opportunity to clearly and effectively communicate in a meaningful and timely way on issues and opportunities relevant to us.

We are here to assist with this process in any way that is helpful. Meanwhile, please know that Wyoming nonprofits are here to help and that the Wyoming Nonprofit Network can provide real-time information and insight to you and your staff in whatever ways that are useful. We currently have a survey out to nonprofits to gather information on the current and anticipated impacts of COVID-19. We have a preliminary report on our website: wynonprofit.org/COVID-19. The survey closes Friday, March 20 and a final report will be available next week.

You can count on the nonprofit community to be a partner in your work, and you can count on the Wyoming Nonprofit Network to be a resource and communications conduit.

Sincerely,

Jody Shields
Executive Director