A Snapshot of Critical Needs

COVID-19 Immediate Relief Response

The Community Relief Fund

For a thriving, resilient and even stronger Rappahannock River Region
The Community Foundation stands with everyone affected by the coronavirus pandemic: people who are ill, people who are grieving, people facing economic uncertainty and profound disruptions to our way of life. We are grateful to every individual, business and organization rising to the challenge and meeting our community’s needs at this difficult time.

Area nonprofit organizations are a vital and necessary protection for many of our most dramatically affected fellow citizens.

Now, more than ever, local nonprofits are stretched to their limits while supporting community needs. They are on the front lines: many provide such basic resources as emergency food, supplies and housing. Some are addressing extremely challenging situations, such as advocating for children who are at home under a protective order or in a trial foster placement. Others are solving new problems created by COVID-19, such as safe, appropriately distanced childcare for medical personnel and first responders.

The Community Foundation offers a way to help: the Community Relief Fund.

Thanks to generous regional donors, nonprofits can apply for a grant using a streamlined online application on The Community Foundation’s website (cfrrr.org). Grants from the Community Relief Fund go to local nonprofits that provide food and shelter, emergency assistance, health/mental health support and more. Nonprofits that serve vulnerable populations are prioritized. These may include children out of school, senior citizens, people experiencing domestic violence or child abuse, or people who have lost income due to the pandemic.

We invite you to visit The Community Foundation’s website at www.cfrrr.org to learn more about the Community Relief Fund. There, anyone can make a donation to support area nonprofits.

Open Letter to Our Community

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Grants can be used for direct services or to help organizations adapt to working with fewer staff or working remotely due to quarantining or social distancing.

It’s no coincidence that The Community Foundation can respond to the pandemic so quickly. The Community Relief Fund was established in October 2019, in response to regional disaster planning initiatives. While localities are well suited to harness government resources during disasters, The Community Foundation is a 501 c 3 nonprofit that can accept donations from individuals who want to lend a hand.

The Community Foundation is honored to be your trusted source of knowledge about regional issues and impactful philanthropy. Through the Community Relief Fund, we leverage 20-plus years of experience to provide funding – rapidly and effectively – to nonprofits that need it most.

In order to make efficient and effective grants to address our region’s immediate needs, we need timely information about the regional nonprofit landscape. We are grateful for the collaborative support of the George Washington Regional Planning Commission to collate and analyze the foundation’s initial area nonprofit needs assessment.

The foundation’s assessment survey asked nonprofits to describe the impact of the pandemic on the people they serve. The results are unprecedented. Most nonprofits surveyed are providing for basic needs for people in our region and the majority are not able to provide at least some of their core services. At the same time, 40% of surveyed nonprofits report that the demand for their services has increased and that they lack adequate funding.

A bleak picture? Those of us who work and volunteer at The Community Foundation know otherwise. We interact daily with essential nonprofits and generous donors. Together, the foundation’s 170 permanent funds collectively give over $1.5 million each year to local nonprofits, churches and schools. The need is urgent and greater than ever before, but we are up for the challenge.

The Community Foundation’s Board of Governors activated the Community Relief Fund with $50,000 and waived its normal 1% administrative fee through June 30, 2020 to ensure 100% of funds go directly to community-based organizations.

At the time of this report, our community has contributed $312,350! Yet, this needs assessment analysis makes it clear that more financial support is needed. **Everyone can help meet the critical needs of local nonprofits and the people they serve by donating to the Community Relief Fund using the foundation’s website at cfrf.org.** Checks can also be made out to: The Community Foundation/Community Relief Fund and mailed to PO Box 208, Fredericksburg, VA 22404.

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The Community Foundation
The Community Foundation established the Community Relief Fund in October 2019 to prepare for any possible future disaster threat to our community. We designed this fund to be a responsive granting resource to be deployed and swiftly assist the Rappahannock River region during times of crisis. Once the significant impact of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in our community became clear, the foundation’s Board of Governors activated the Community Relief Fund.

The foundation’s goal for the fund is to work collaboratively with the nonprofit, government, philanthropic and private sectors to accelerate recovery for a thriving, resilient and even stronger Rappahannock River region. We support organizations that are addressing both immediate needs and longer-term effects of the pandemic, with a focus on community recovery.

The Community Foundation has a 20-plus year history working efficiently and effectively to help our community of donors make impactful gifts to organizations working to strengthen our region. We are committed to working with funding partners and community collaborators to move resources quickly and adapt to evolving community needs.

Through unanimous support of our board, all administrative costs have been waived through June 30, 2020 to ensure that 100% of funds are distributed to community-based organizations in need.

The Community Foundation’s approach to crisis response is informed by:

• A dedicated and dynamic team of staff and board with extensive experience in economic and community development, grant management, and community-wide giving initiatives who are committed to the vitality of our region.

• This report’s analysis of community-based nonprofit organizations to identify the most pressing needs during the early stages of the pandemic.

• Proactive, purposeful and ongoing communications with key community leaders.

The first grants from this fund are helping human services organizations on the front lines that have deep roots in the community and strong experience working with vulnerable populations. These rapid response grants are designed to address gaps in services and increase capacity of organizations to meet basic needs of individuals and families. A full list of immediate relief grants from The Community Relief is available on our website cfrrr.org.

While the initial priority is to address immediate needs, we anticipate additional funds will be released on a rolling basis through outbreak and recovery phases of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Between March 25 and April 10, The Community Foundation of the Rappahannock River Region, which serves Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania and Stafford Counties, as well as the city of Fredericksburg, surveyed nearly 100 area nonprofits to determine the initial impact of COVID-19 on their mission and operations. Our goal was to ascertain the impact to services as well as identify how the philanthropic community could best support our region’s frontline nonprofit organizations and assist those most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This impact report will help inform the foundation’s disaster philanthropy strategies and funding priorities now and into the future.

The Community Foundation emailed an online survey to 368 regional nonprofit organizations and shared the survey link broadly on the foundation’s website and social media channels. As of this report date, 95 organizations completed 60 – 100% of the survey questions. Because the COVID-19 crisis impact is continually evolving, nonprofits have been encouraged to update their responses as their circumstances change. The foundation is monitoring these evolving needs.

Area nonprofits were asked to identify the needs they address, services they offer and populations they serve from a list of pre-defined examples. Recognizing that these organizations have a direct perspective on the needs faced in our community, the foundation also offered an “other” option for each survey question. This option provided an open-ended opportunity for organizations to share their specific and significant experiences related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We’re grateful. The process was easy at this stressful time. Nothing like having a 10-20 page application and waiting months to get help. Thank you for doing something different.”
Over 76 percent (76.3%) of responding nonprofits indicated that they were not able to offer at least some of their core services and programs as a result of COVID-19.

While some nonprofits were able to change how they deliver services (20.7% of those impacted), most are not able to continue a large portion of their most significant services.

The largest portion of area nonprofits that responded are currently focused on providing for the most basic needs, food and shelter. A significant number are also offering mental health services. Some are providing childcare for first responders and health care personnel. Nonprofits that are a part of, or support our tourism industry and small businesses is another impacted group.

All segments of our community are impacted and need nonprofit services – children, seniors, veterans, adults, and those with disabilities or facing mental health challenges.

More than 45% of nonprofits reported that COVID-19 is creating an even greater demand for services.

Another 37% indicate that COVID-19 is causing organization hardship due to a lack of funding, for example because critical fundraising events are cancelled.

When responding nonprofits were asked to estimate the additional financial resources needed for the next 30 – 45 days, the combined total exceeded $1.84 million.

Many nonprofits are influenced by the increased needs created by the pandemic such as mental health services, domestic violence sheltering, homeless services, and food support.

Our nonprofit community has been creative, attempting to transition much of their work to online platforms or adopt “no contact” strategies. For example, some medical and therapy services have been converted to telehealth, while some food providers have moved to distribute fewer perishable items. A larger portion of the nonprofits simply cannot make this transition, and few can transition all aspects of their services. Only 9.2% of respondents reported both an increase in the need for services and the ability to successfully expand delivery.

Not Able to Offer at Least Some Core Services and Programs Due to COVID-19

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<th>76.3%</th>
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Impact of COVID-19 on Providing Core Services

| 23.7% | Impact on Services Not Yet Determined |
| 9.2% | Services Need and Delivery Has Increased |
| 15.8% | Services Negatively Impacted, but Able to Use Alternative Delivery Methods (for some services) |
| 51.3% | Core Services are Negatively Impacted |
Needs Being Addressed by Area Nonprofits

Human service organizations provide basic needs and services for people who are in crisis or people who have chronic problems. They help improve public health, safety and economic conditions for their community.

At 22.4%, general human services are the largest single type of need being addressed. Food access was broken out from general human services and comprised the next largest portion of needs at 20.3%. Housing, education, and health-related needs represent a combined 35%.

A deeper dive into the open-ended responses shows the span of need – from animal welfare to stress management and easing feelings of isolation, to providing cleaning supplies.

Types of Emergency Relief Services Provided

During the pandemic, area nonprofits have been heavily involved in providing emergency relief services to those in need. The vast majority of responding organizations are providing basic resources such as food and meals, clothing, money, and emergency supplies. Others are providing temporary housing and shelter. Some are advocating for children who are at home in a difficult family situation (under a protective order or in a trial placement, for example). Many are responding to an increased need for mental health services. Some are helping with new problems created by COVID-19, such as providing childcare for essential workers, medical personnel and first responders.
As before the pandemic, our nonprofit community is serving a wide variety of individuals and groups. When asked about their primary and secondary groups served, by far the largest population included those who are economically disadvantaged or experiencing homelessness. A significant number of nonprofits focus their services on an age-specific group such as seniors, children/youth, or adults.

When the responses that fell into the “other” category were analyzed, economically disadvantaged continued to be the largest population served.

Twenty-one nonprofits served a population defined as “other.” For example, a historic preservation organization supports our community as a whole and serves multiple populations, while other organizations provide services to specialized populations including families facing pediatric cancer, veterans, or adult and child protective services.

“...We support those in the general population who are at higher risk for COVID-19 and may not have the mental capacity to understand handwashing and social distancing precautions so additional support is needed from our staff.”
When asked to describe the vulnerable populations being served, the answers were disquieting. Sample answers include:

“Minute by minute we continue to learn new information related to COVID-19 and adapt our care delivery model to ensure that our charitable healthcare clinic remains open, where we continue to welcome what remains true is this: our patients are among those most vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus and associated complications. Over half of our patients have chronic health conditions, and many already live with food and housing insecurity. They are some of the most likely to catch the disease, some of the most likely to be endangered by it, and some of the first people to be negatively affected by the economic consequences of the pandemic that we are only just beginning to feel.”

“All the people we serve are vulnerable. They’re children who’ve been abused or neglected by their parents. Some are in foster care, and some remain at home under court/DSS monitoring. Most of their parents struggle with a multitude of challenges -- mental health substance abuse, housing instability, and employment instability.”

“We focus on those literally on the street as well as those precariously housed. Our concern is the growing number of people discharging from the hospital with nowhere to go and the burden this places on our organization to serve a new population that isn’t necessarily ‘homeless,’ but cannot go home due to the pandemic.”

“We customarily serve pet owners experiencing economic hardship though our PETS program and food pantry; we are currently experiencing a greater need than ever before for our food and supply pantry.”

“Survivors of domestic violence and their children are vulnerable. They are placed at further risk because of their compromised immune systems and their routine practices of putting everyone else first with their own health and well-being as the very least of priorities. With schools out, children home, job loss or telecommuting, increased purchase of guns and ammunition, guidance to reduce arrests because of jail conditions, isolation in the home, more stress at home, more time on their abusers’ hands to monitor their actions and torture them, COVID-19 social distancing further isolating them, their safety is at heightened risk with the domestic violence risk of injuries and death. They also may fear risking the call to 911, wondering if they will get a response and not knowing whether there is a response that would help them or leave them further endangered. They also see everything closing and few people gathering and coming and going which makes any effort to call attention to their situation and emergency need that much more remote of a possibility.”

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Organizational Impact of COVID-19 on Area Nonprofit Organizations

“Besides financial hardships, we have lost all our volunteers to support our mission.”

Area nonprofits indicate that they are being impacted by a greater demand for services, while at the same time seeing a loss of revenue. The situation creates significant organizational strain.

Indeed, many of those listed within the “other” category are included in this total, challenged by both a loss of revenue and an increased need for services.

Additional comments from the survey provide a window into the uphill battle faced by our charitable organizations.

“COVID-19 restrictions have disrupted our distribution channels, requiring new strategies and approaches with partners.”

“We’re terrified about some children’s safety but can’t currently visit them in-person.”

“We have had to close our food pantry which has provided food assistance to [college] students [in need] for over two years.”

“We are providing services now that will likely not be reimbursed in order to continue to provide care.”

We invite you to visit The Community Foundation’s website at www.cfrr.org to learn more about the Community Relief Fund. There, anyone can make a donation to support area nonprofits.
According to initial estimates from responding nonprofits, total known costs and requests associated with responding to the pandemic is over $1.84 million. Many of these requests are very modest appeals to cover the most basic relief. Of those nonprofits who shared an estimate of their six-week funding needs, 32.9% indicated they needed less than $10,000. Another 53.4% reported a need of $25,000 or less. However, the narrative comments suggest that these are estimates for short-term, stopgap needs.

Current reports suggest that the pandemic and its impacts will continue beyond the 6-week funding estimate. Even conservative guesses suggest the financial needs will only grow in the long-term.

The stories and data received directly from nonprofits show the urgency and necessity of The Community Foundation’s Community Relief Fund. In the words of one of the responding nonprofits,

“In the long run, local support will continue to be vital to our work and to our community. As the economic implications of the pandemic unfold, more people in our community are going to become unemployed, uninsured, or medically underserved. The numbers of people who need our services are going to keep growing, and we will be called to meet that need.”

The Community Relief Fund of The Community Foundation offers a way to help. This fund is an essential resource for our region.

With this needs assessment as a guide, The Community Foundation is deploying the Community Relief Fund to:

- Maximize the effectiveness of charitable giving at this critical time.
- Thoughtfully evaluate community issues and nonprofit solutions so donors can give with confidence.
- Support targeted, regional grants for the good of our community over the lifecycle of the coronavirus pandemic.

Everyone can be a part of this essential work to preserve the vitality and well-being of the Rappahannock River region. Please visit our website at cfrrr.org to make a donation or learn more.
Acknowledgements

This report is made possible by the alacrity of area nonprofits who took time, while under duress, to share information about their organizations as well as the people and missions they serve. We are grateful for their resolute approach and consistent support of our region.

We acknowledge with appreciation the partnership of the George Washington Regional Planning Commission to compile and analyze collected data. The planning commission is an association of local governments that encourages and facilitates cooperation to address regional issues and plan strategic solutions.

The Community Foundation also recognizes and thanks these individual contributors:

Ali Thomas, Programs Manager and Community Relief Fund Lead, The Community Foundation

Linda Millsaps, PhD, Executive Director, George Washington Regional Planning Commission

Jennifer Morgan, Economic Development Coordinator, George Washington Regional Commission

Finally, thank you to our generous community for your donations to support area nonprofits at this critical time.

“We are very impressed by the efficient method (The Community Foundation) developed for making grants and the speed with which you pulled it all together. We feel sure that Doris, who loved the Fredericksburg community and who felt loved by the Fredericksburg community, would very much have wanted the Sunshine Lady Foundation to take part in this community effort.

We were motivated to make this donation on her behalf by our warm memories of her special Fredericksburg relationship and our trust in The Community Foundation leadership and goals.”

The Sunshine Lady Foundation

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