March 26, 2020

The Honorable Henry McMaster  
Governor of South Carolina  
SC State House  
1100 Gervais Street  
Columbia, SC  29201

Dear Governor McMaster:

The SC Grantmakers Network, the United Way Association of SC and Together SC (our state’s network of nonprofits) thank you for your leadership thus far in protecting our state and our citizens during this unprecedented Coronavirus pandemic.

We believe that philanthropic organizations, charitable nonprofits, and businesses are all key partners with government in assuring the economic and physical well-being of our people. We all have a role to play.

SC’s nonprofit leaders are diligently delivering resources to the most vulnerable, rapidly moving community services online, and engaging our citizens in raising private funds and safely volunteering, all to prevent undue hardship.

The need for our services has only increased during the Coronavirus pandemic. We are feeding the hungry, providing rental and food assistance, housing the homeless, educating our citizens, caring for our children and the elderly, and providing health care, amongst a host of other roles. Yet, revenues and fundraising resources are quickly diminishing. Your nonprofit allies seek your help so that we can continue to do good.

In partnership with the thousands of operating charitable nonprofits, the 25 local United Ways, and fifty plus corporate, private and community foundations that our three organizations serve and represent, we ask you to ensure that nonprofit organizations are given the same consideration and financial support that our government provides businesses. All are suffering equally.

As a first step, we ask that you enable governmental agencies to continue paying all grants and contracts with nonprofits.

Many nonprofits are integral partners with state agencies like DHHS, DSS, DEW and DHEC in providing critical services. Significant disruptions in state grants and contracts could permanently shut down organizations providing health services, childcare, food assistance,
senior care, and many other essential services in our state.

For these reasons, it is important to:

a. Preserve existing grants and contracts. If programs cannot be implemented due to the necessary public health response to this pandemic, provide temporary relief from contract deliverables and expedite contract modifications to better support crisis-response.

b. Allow state agencies to waive certain certification procedures to let nonprofits provide emergency and essential services as needed.

c. Follow the lead of the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in temporarily loosening grant and contract reporting, application and renewal requirements.

Additionally, as you seek frontline input and insights and real-time solutions, consult with nonprofit leaders statewide and include them in task forces appointed to advise the state on COVID-19 response. Nonprofits are a trusted presence and communications pipeline for many of our constituencies. They will bring the concerns and knowledge of the nonprofit sector to the conversation.

Remember, nonprofits play vital roles in every community, large and small, providing substantial economic impact, including employing over 90,000 of our citizens.

It is impossible to imagine our great state without a thriving nonprofit sector. It is our great state’s way of coming together – in good and bad times – to support one another and make sure South Carolinians are safe and thriving.

Thank you for your leadership in the challenging weeks ahead.

Sincerely,

Naomi Lett  
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