



WASHINGTON NONPROFITS

WE MAKE SURE NONPROFITS HAVE WHAT THEY NEED TO SUCCEED.

2019-20 Public Policy Principles

Background:

Washington's nonprofit sector provides services in virtually every community in the state, generates more than 240,000 jobs, and leverages over \$5 billion worth of volunteer services each year. In short, our sector is a major provider of the services, jobs, and civic engagement that makes our communities better. That's why Washington Nonprofits is proud to protect, promote, and advance the state's nonprofit sector within the Washington State Legislature.

As the state's nonprofit association, we make sure that nonprofits have what they need to succeed. In terms of our 2019-20 legislative agenda that means building an environment that supports the nonprofits that support our communities. We plan to operationalize this agenda through a framework with three elements: protect, promote, and advance.

Protect: We track introductions of bills to identify potential threats to the sector.

Examples: (1) In 2018, we worked to inform the Department of Labor's rule making on overtime pay in order to protect nonprofits' abilities to deliver services. (2) We also successfully modified the DISCLOSE Act to ease the disclosure burden on nonprofits involved in ballot measure campaigns.

Promote: We are working to increase policymakers' understanding of the importance of our sector so that they are committed to supporting nonprofits. This understanding is a foundation to building strong policy and budget environment that supports and advances our sector. **Examples:** (1) Sharing nonpartisan research about the nonprofit sector. (2) Hosting our annual legislative reception and connecting with legislators in district and in Olympia.

Advance: We are working to improve the partnership between nonprofits and government in ways that strengthen communities.

Examples: (1) Washington Nonprofits is a champion for cross-sector collaboration, and will advocate for tools that facilitate collaborative work, such as data sharing and contracting reform. (2) One key focus area for us will be the 2020 Census, which requires nonprofits, government, philanthropy, and the private sector to work together to get out the count. (3) We also will promote and provide education to nonprofits to ensure compliance with state laws and regulations.

2019-20 Legislative Framework

1. Tax Policy: Empowering Community Solutions through Nonprofits

Appropriate tax policies at the federal, state, and local levels are critical to the success of charitable nonprofits in pioneering and implementing solutions to community problems and aspirations. Washington Nonprofits is committed to preserving the tax-exempt status of organizations contributing to the well-being of their communities and strengthening and expanding incentives for individuals to give their time and money to nonprofit organizations whose missions they support.

Washington Nonprofits supports proposals that:

- Maintain and - where appropriate - expand nonprofit exemptions from paying state and local property, sales, excise and use taxes.

Washington Nonprofits opposes proposals that:

- Establish floors, caps, or limits on existing charitable giving incentives.
- Impose fees, payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs), and taxes on tax-exempt nonprofit organizations that divert charitable resources to government.
- Create state and local tax (SALT) deduction cap work around programs that could create confusion for donors and/or put nonprofit organizations at a disadvantage.

2. Budget, Spending, and the Economy: Addressing Community Needs

As employers, taxpayers, and service providers, nonprofit organizations are integrally involved in the economies of their communities. Washington Nonprofits opposes the offloading of government services onto nonprofits without paying nonprofits the full cost of providing these services. When federal, state, and local revenue is reduced, nonprofits providing public services through grants and contracts with government typically receive disproportionate cuts.

Washington Nonprofits supports proposals that:

- Ensure that incentives to improve wages, leave, and/or health care coverage apply equally to nonprofit employers.
- Ensure that mandated raises in wage laws are accounted for in public contract rates.

Washington Nonprofits opposes proposals that:

- Mandate increased operating costs for nonprofits without providing funds for implementation (unfunded mandates).
- Call for arbitrary and across the board budget cuts.

3. Partnering for a Successful 2020 Census

Nonprofits are private organizations that share a commitment with governments to improving lives and communities throughout the state. Washington Nonprofits is dedicated to strengthening the public-private partnership through collaboration and direct engagement,

particularly on the 2020 U.S. Census. The Census impacts the resources and data available for nonprofits to serve their communities, as well as the political representation that is accountable to communities. Because of this, Washington Nonprofits will support aligned public and private efforts to ensure an accurate 2020 Census count.

Washington Nonprofits supports proposals that:

- Allocate additional funds for Census implementation in Washington State.
- Direct resources to marginalized, rural, and other hard to count communities in an effort to ensure that those populations are counted accurately.
- Ensure inclusive representation in decision-making that impacts hard to count and other marginalized communities.
- Challenge the legality and utility of the proposed citizenship question.

Washington Nonprofits opposes proposals that:

- Restrict the ability of communities to participate in the Census, whether deliberately or by accident.

4. Public Accountability: Ensuring Public Trust

Mission-driven nonprofits can be successful only by earning and maintaining public trust. Washington Nonprofits supports policies that balance transparency concerns with reasonable regulations that are feasible for nonprofit organizations.

Washington Nonprofits supports reforms to:

- Maintain a balance between protecting and informing the public and preventing excessive and disruptive regulatory burdens that hinder the missions of charitable nonprofits.
- Set reasonable thresholds for mandatory audits of nonprofit finances.
- Protect the decision-making autonomy and self-governance authority of charitable nonprofits.
- Clarify that the applications of state and local open meeting laws are limited to governmental entities and do not generally apply to private nonprofits or for-profit organizations.
- Modernize existing statutes governing nonprofit organizations.

Washington Nonprofits opposes proposals that:

- Restrict the advocacy rights of charitable nonprofits.

5. Promoting Civic Engagement

In order for our democracy to work properly, nonprofits and their clients must be engaged in our civic processes. Because of this, Washington Nonprofits supports policies that empower nonprofits and communities to participate in civil society.

Washington Nonprofits supports proposals that:

- Protect and expand voting rights.
- Expand civic knowledge and opportunities for participation.
- Increase the partnership between nonprofits, communities, and government.
- Support programs or incentives that encourage individuals to volunteer their time and contribute money to nonprofits.

Washington Nonprofits opposes policies that:

- Restrict voting rights.

We can't elevate the voice of nonprofits without your voice. We will be hosting events and forums throughout the year to inform, engage, and inspire. We are looking forward to working with you!

Contact Washington Nonprofits:

David Streeter
Director of Public Policy and Advocacy
408-505-6606
david@washingtonnonprofits.org