WE MAKE SURE NONPROFITS HAVE WHAT THEY NEED TO SUCCEED
Introduction

2020 was a year of crisis and rapid change. Our Northwest communities faced a pandemic, economic devastation and wildfires. The ongoing crisis of systemic racism became harder for white people to deny or ignore with the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities and the police murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery and many others.

Nonprofits have been deeply affected by these societal upheavals on many levels. We are on the frontlines helping people survive and adapt. In 2020, many nonprofit staff and volunteers continued to serve their communities, often at great risk to themselves and responding to increased need for basic services. Others saw the theater season or community festival they had meticulously planned for cancelled suddenly, or they were forced to close their doors indefinitely.

Nonprofits are working in radically new ways—remotely or while donning PPE and social distancing. Our organizations are struggling financially and increasingly at risk as reserves are used up and the disruption continues far longer than we hoped. Many teams are exhausted and drained. At the same time, we are innovating, breaking long established patterns that no longer serve us, and challenging ourselves to build a more equitable world.

For help in navigating and enduring the hardships and for inspiration to evolve the way we do our work, our nonprofit community needs a strong state association—a place to connect and learn from each other, get reliable information, and unite our voices to demand policy changes. The team at Washington Nonprofits is proud to serve our diverse and powerful nonprofit sector in Washington state. We’ve worked hard this year and will continue to do our best to find answers, lift up what is working, and highlight the importance of the work nonprofits do. Our strength is in our network, so please stay engaged, share your experiences, help each other. Together, we’ll make it through this stronger and more resilient than before.
Our year started with a **full calendar of learning workshops in many locations from Aberdeen to Walla Walla** as well as our **Seventh Annual Nonprofit Legislative Reception in Olympia**.

Our **2020 Census Get Out the Count** efforts were in full swing, with a focus on mobilizing nonprofits to encourage census participation through education and distribution of **Nonprofit Census Action Kit** materials, and on deeper partnerships with nonprofits in rural locations.

In the middle of a busy season for learning, we held our **last in-person event on March 12**, cancelling some events and moving others online.

During the month of March alone, we held **six online events focused on COVID**, attended by a total of 2,678 people. People across the country looked to Washington because the first US epicenter of the pandemic was in the Seattle area.

We updated our **Coronavirus Resources** web page every few days as new information became available.

### March 2020:

**A Month of Change**

- Increase in website traffic **217%**
- Online events focused on COVID-19 **6**
- Total COVID-19 webinar attendees: **2,678**

**Nonprofit Census Action Kit materials** were available in over a dozen languages and formats on a dedicated website.
Our Central Washington Conference for the Greater Good in April and the Washington State Nonprofit Conference in May were among the first large scale gatherings moved online. We organized and hosted the events in-house for a total of 650 people.

We launched an Executive Director Coffee Hour for mutual support and information sharing in April and held 10 sessions in 2020 serving 184 different executive directors (367 total event registrations)

We stepped up advocacy at the federal and state levels, lobbying our Congressional delegation and state officials for inclusion of nonprofits in COVID relief programs.

We convened a Nonprofit COVID Advocacy Workgroup that brought together 78 advocates from 71 nonprofit organizations and coalitions across many fields of service to strategize together and coordinate our efforts to secure COVID relief at the federal, state, and county levels. The Workgroup met 28 times in 2020.

Our advocacy included an Open Letter to Elected Officials and an Open Letter to Funders explaining what nonprofits needed to effectively support their communities during the pandemic. We coordinated a COVID Relief Sign-on Letter with 335 organizational signers and issued 11 Action Alerts.

Working closely with partners in the field, we adapted our census outreach strategies for COVID safety, shifting from poster and handbills to social media tiles and printed grocery bags distributed to food banks. We provided census outreach training to 1,284 people via 66 trainings and webinars, connected a network of 387 census organizers, and distributed over 425,000 outreach materials via our network of nonprofits.

In collaboration with others, we worked to help nonprofits access Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans.

We convened a COVID Capacity Builders Coordination Workgroup that grew to 57 participants from 36 organizations and met 12 times in 2020.

In May and June, we supported affiliated local nonprofit networks in Spokane, Newport, Yakima, and Kittitas County as they shifted to meeting online.

In May and June: Conferences pivot to online platforms
Number of Conferences 2
Number of attendees 650

Nonprofits Vital to Recovery

Nonprofits are at the heart of every community across our state.
There are 30,808 charitable nonprofit organizations in Washington.
Nonprofits offer good jobs.
• Nonprofits in Washington State employ nearly 270,000 people and pay over $13 billion in wages annually. The represent 10% of the private workforce.
• Nonprofits employ 21% more people than the construction industry in Washington, and just 16% less people than the manufacturing sector.
• Nonprofits pay higher average wages than for-profits in most fields, including healthcare, education and social assistance.
Nonprofits mobilize volunteers.
• 30% of Washingtonians volunteer, contributing over 198 million hours of volunteer services valued at over $5 billion.
Most importantly, nonprofits strengthen our communities.

Nonprofits Must Be Included in Relief and Recovery Funding
Nonprofits have longstanding and earned expertise
• Nonprofits have long-standing, earned experience in managing complex programs and services delivered to vulnerable populations, and the proven capacity to increase capacity and scale up in critical areas.
• Nonprofits are well-suited to work with communities.
Nonprofits are essential to economic recovery.
• Nonprofits are vital to the health of communities, and economic recovery depends on their capacity to deliver critical services.

If state and local budgets are cut due to decreased revenue, many community services provided by nonprofits could be at risk. Nonprofits depend on government grants and contracts for 32% of their revenue overall (second only to fees for services).
During the summer, the focus was on reopening and how nonprofits could operate safely. We held a series of **four community conversations called Considerations for Reopening** (657 total registrants for all 4 events), including a briefing by the Governor’s Office and three panel discussions featuring nonprofit leaders who were wrestling with logistics, personnel concerns and disruptions brought on by the pandemic.

The **BIPOC Executive Director’s Coalition** launched with an emergency meeting in June, quickly grew to a network of 413 leaders, and held seven meetings in 2020 with back office support from Washington Nonprofits. The Coalition has now transitioned to being hosted by Byrd Barr Place, a BIPOC-led organization. We continue to partner to support the effort.

As the need to work remotely continued into the fall, we presented a **series of five webinars on how to work together virtually**—virtual board meetings, fundraisers, collaboration and more—reaching 465 total registrants.

We presented the latest **UW research on COVID-19 and Nonprofits**, and we convened 202 leaders to talk about “**Tackling the Next Phase Together.**”

We updated our **strategic plan** to reflect the changes that we’ve been through and agreed that remaining nimble and responsive to changing nonprofit needs is our priority.

By the year end, we had brought together **13,403 people through 181 events**. 6,483 unique viewers accessed our learning videos online.

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**2020 by the Numbers**

- **Number of attendees**: 13,403
- **Number of events**: 181
- **Total video views**: 17,335
- **Number of viewers**: 6,483
- Top website download: “Sample forms for volunteers and clients during COVID-19.”
Washington Nonprofits turned 10 years old in 2020.

We continue to build our infrastructure, HR systems, and policies. This work is being done with an equity lens. In 2020, we improved our recruitment and hiring processes and implemented exit interviews for departing staff. We established a new board development process, and instituted ongoing equity learning opportunities for board and staff. Our staff grew with the addition of a Communications Manager, and we began the process of recruiting a Director of Community Engagement.

Washington Nonprofits experienced budget growth this year. We played a key role in mobilizing nonprofits to get out the count for the 2020 Census and we geared up to provide COVID-19 resources and educational programs (both of which brought in extra targeted funding).

We are grateful to our members as our nonprofit memberships grew 21%. You let us know that especially in financially difficult times, you value your membership in Washington Nonprofits. We hope to continue our momentum in 2021 so that we can invest in building a stronger, more influential network.

WHAT OUR MEMBERS SAY

...about Next Level Nonprofit

“I am just flabbergasted at the amount and richness of the information, guides and videos. This series is a truly fine education in board development.”

...about Let’s Go Legal

“It is a clear need, no matter how much you think you know.”
Thank You to Our Funders

We are grateful to funders who invested in us, recognizing the key role we are playing support thousands of nonprofits who are vulnerable during this crisis.

Bernier McCaw Foundation
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Community Foundation of Snohomish County
Grays Harbor Community Foundation
Group Health Foundation
Innovia Foundation
JP Morgan Chase
Serve Washington
Statewide Capacity Collaborative
Washington Census Equity Fund
Washington State Department of Labor & Industries
Washington State Department of Labor & Industries Safety and Health Improvement Project
Washington State Office of Financial Management
Washington State Office of the Secretary of State
Whidbey Community Foundation
Ballmer Group
Murdock Charitable Trust
Seattle Foundation
Stolte Family Foundation
Seattle Foundation
Sherwood Trust
Yakima Valley Community Foundation

We are also grateful for financial support from our board members and other individual donors.

WHAT OUR MEMBERS SAY

...about Boards in Gear

“This webinar has helped me define where I want to go and what I want to achieve...and now I can more efficiently plan for that outcome.”

“Two of our board members attended the workshop and came away inspired to make some changes and implement some new ideas they learned.”
What’s Next for Washington Nonprofits?

We recognize that we are still in a time of change and uncertainty. Our programming in 2021 will be grounded in the following beliefs:

- Nonprofits must stay unified during this crisis and beyond. We are stronger together.
- Adaptive leadership requires collaboration to share information and develop new strategies.
- We must improve our internal practices to increase equity and advocate for strategies that reduce disparities and increase equity in philanthropy and nonprofits.
- Systemic inequities in society are also present in the nonprofit sector. We are committed to reaching, supporting, and partnering with nonprofits led by BIPOC people, rural residents, and other marginalized communities.
- Nonprofits are integral to shaping a “better normal” for the future.

We plan to:

- Continue to center and listen to nonprofits and respond with timely information and programs that address emergent needs and topics.
- Strengthen community engagement by increasing local staffing and partnerships across Washington state, including rural areas.
- Maintain a robust learning program through online offerings—core nonprofit management and governance workshops plus timely special topics—adding back in-person workshops when it is safe to do so.
- Provide nonprofits with new resources to help them navigate workplace safety and changing labor laws.
- Assist nonprofits in gaining access to COVID relief grants and loans.
- Provide increased opportunities for affinity groups to convene and learn together.
- Continue to advocate vigorously for the importance of nonprofits to our economic and social wellbeing.

Please join us.

Whether you are a nonprofit leader or an ally, please be in touch with us to share how you would like to contribute to our collective work building a strong and influential nonprofit sector.