

Strengthening Civic Infrastructure as We Respond to COVID-19

February 25, 2021

Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable John Yarmuth
Chairman, Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable Jason Smith
Ranking Member, Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Chairman Yarmuth, and Ranking Member Smith:

As organizations representing 1.6 million nonprofits in America, we write to express our support for provisions in the *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021* that will bolster community and civic structures that ensure all communities across America, especially Black, Indigenous, and other people of color who have been disproportionately impacted by this pandemic, can rebuild, engage, and thrive.

We are members of the Nonprofit Infrastructure Investment Advocacy Group (NIIAG), which supports policies that recognize the essential role community and civic infrastructure plays in meeting the challenges of the public health and economic crises unleashed by COVID-19. We are grateful that the *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021* addresses many key priorities outlined in the most recent [NIIAG policy agenda](#) and we urge you to include these additional provisions as the legislation moves forward.

Specifically, we write to express our support for provisions that provide supplemental funding to advance:

- **Digital access for all** – Distance learning, telemedicine, and spiritual services require accessible and reliable internet services. While many nonprofits are able to convert to virtual operations, the persistent digital divide prevents them from fully serving their communities. The \$7.6 billion Emergency Connectivity Fund will help eligible schools and other organizations provide connected devices and internet access to students and teachers for use at home.
- **Childcare for working parents** – The childcare system is on the verge of collapse due to COVID-19. Without emergency stabilization, many nonprofit employees will not be able to return to work full-time, even once the virus is under control, and already-burdensome tuition will hurt nonprofit employees even more as increased costs are passed along by providers. By providing \$3.55 billion per year to the Child Care Entitlement for States, \$15 billion for the Child Care and Development Block Grant, and \$24 billion for subgrants to qualified providers, the *American Rescue Plan Act of 2021* will help alleviate the immediate burden faced by many families and stabilize this critical industry.
- **Culture, arts, and humanities workers and programs** – These cultural, arts, and humanities workers and programs are vital to the nonprofit sector and essential to the economy, vitality, and well-being of the communities they serve. Additionally, they have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic due to the nature of their work. The \$135 million for the National Endowment for the Arts, \$135 million for the National Endowment for the Humanities, \$200 million for the Institute of Museum and Library Services, and \$10 million for Native American language preservation will support the programming and operations of these organizations at a particularly vulnerable time.

- **National service** – We support robust federal funding for an expanded vision of national service, including an increase in the number of funded positions. The \$1 billion provided to the Corporation for National and Community Service (including funding to state commissions and the Volunteer Generation Fund) will support an increase in AmeriCorps volunteers to respond to communities impacted by COVID-19. We appreciate that grants will be prioritized considering the diversity of communities and participants, similar to recommendations from the Inspired 2 Serve report.
- **Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)** – As people continue to spend significantly more time in their homes, it is increasingly important to ensure they can pay increased energy costs. The legislation provides LIHEAP with an additional \$4.5 billion which we strongly support.
- **Clean, healthy transit** – Transit plays an important role in keeping people safe during the pandemic, fighting climate change, and improving public health. We strongly support the provision in this legislation for an additional \$30 billion to the Federal Transit Administration to assist with operating costs, including payroll and personal protective equipment.

We thank you for the work that you and your colleagues continue to do to make sure our nation emerges from this pandemic strong and ready to rebuild our communities, especially Black, Indigenous, and other communities of color, in ways that make us better than before this crisis. Nonprofit organizations are an indispensable and trusted partner in this work. That is why we support these provisions and ask you to work for their enactment. Nonprofits need these tools to go about the business of rebuilding our future, and we need your help.

We trust we can count on your support.

Sincerely,

ACCESS
 Americans for the Arts
 Americans for the Arts Action Fund
 Communities in Schools
 Community Resource Center
 Council of Michigan Foundations
 Dream Corps Green For All
 Fund the People
 Independent Sector
 KABOOM!
 MENTOR
 Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
 National Indian Child Welfare Association
 National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).
 National Urban Indian Family Coalition
 Native Ways Federation
 Philanthropy West Virginia
 Service Year Alliance
 St. Jude Innovation Fund of Parkersburg, WV
 StriveTogether
 TechSoup
 The Henry Ford
 United Philanthropy Forum
 United Way Worldwide
 YMCA of the USA
 YWCA USA