



# The Nonprofit Infrastructure Coalition

## Public Policy Agenda for 2023

### About the NIC

The Nonprofit Infrastructure Coalition or the NIC, is an advocacy coalition of nearly 50 member organizations, coming from all parts of our sector and nation. The NIC, co-led by Independent Sector and KABOOM!, was created in 2020 to ensure that public policies – in the continuing wake of the pandemic, economic disruption, and social unrest -- are supporting a healthy and equitable sector. This commitment to investing in an infrastructure of healthy and equitable nonprofits binds the membership of the NIC because we know that a healthy and equitable charitable sector is a necessary precondition to a nation where all people thrive.

### The NIC 2023 Policy Advocacy Priorities

#### Representation and Voice

Despite being the third-largest employer of the private workforce in the nation and responsible for delivering almost six percent of its gross domestic product, the nonprofit sector has no permanent representation within the federal government. This lack of representation and voice has consequences – especially when federal policies are created that impact nonprofits and the communities we serve. When the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) was created in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, there was no one “at the table” to caution that administering PPP through the Small Business Administration with an application form well-suited for business, but not nonprofits, could be problematic. Despite the overall success of PPP, many nonprofits were left out of line.

Because nonprofits are the backbone of our civic life, among the most trusted institutions in the U.S., and an essential partner to government in lifting up communities across the U.S., **we call upon both the Biden Administration and the Congress to create an Office on the Nonprofit Sector within the Executive Branch.** A presidential signature on this proposed Executive Order and congressional **passage of the bipartisan Nonprofit SEAT Act** will help to ensure that nonprofits – and the communities we serve – are healthy, equitable, and have a “seat at the table” in the policy process.

### The Focus of the NIC

The NIC has three core focus areas:

#### A Sector with Representation and Voice

Advance public policies that ensure that the nonprofit sector has growing and permanent representation and voice across the federal government

#### A Healthy and Equitable Sector

Nonprofits have the capacity (financial, workforce/volunteer, advocacy skills) to advance their missions and model equitable practices

#### A Conducive Enabling Environment

The larger environment in which nonprofits operate is supportive of nonprofits, their aims, and their work.

Having a permanent presence in the Executive Branch is critical. In addition, we know that – even with a “seat at the table” – nonprofits must use our voices as public policy advocates. Today, the rules around political activity are both extremely important (to keep nonprofits on the right side of the lobbying line), while also extremely complicated. That complexity has a chilling effect on many nonprofits that simply find it easier to refrain from policy advocacy than try and understand the rules. **As a coalition, we aim to work with the experts and policymakers to clarify rules for nonprofits to engage in advocacy, lobbying, and nonpartisan civic activities**, so that more of them can use their voices in the policymaking process.

### Healthy and Equitable Nonprofit Sector

A healthy nonprofit sector requires a robust and diverse pipeline of donors so individual organizations can advance their missions and the sector, as a whole, and bring about a nation in which all people thrive. We encourage Congress to pass **The Charitable Act**, bipartisan legislation that will ensure that **all people who donate to charities – not just those higher-income earners who itemize their taxes – are incentivized by the tax code to do so**. This is not only a matter of donors and dollars – it is also a matter of fairness. Creating this tax incentive is **supported by more than 75%** of American voters.

The nonprofit workforce represents more than ten percent of private sector employment, the nation’s third largest. Despite its size, and despite paying billions in payroll taxes, nonprofit employers are ineligible for many tax credits that for-profit employers use to diversify and strengthen their workforce. **We call on Congress to expand eligibility for key tax incentives to include nonprofits**, ensuring that employers of every type can invest in their workforce, making it healthier and more equitable.

Unlike commercial limousine drivers and commercial goat farmers (no joke), the nonprofit sector does not receive quarterly wage and employment data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This data, available to all parts of the private sector, is essential to understanding the state of our workforce, and the policies that might be needed to improve its vitality, especially after the pandemic. **We call upon the Department of Labor, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and the Congress to make quarterly wage and employment data available to the nonprofit sector** – just the same as it is for our colleagues in the private sector.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of nonprofit organizations and the communities they serve – providing proactive leadership, delivering essential services, and expanding the impact of nonprofit missions. We also know that those who engage with nonprofits as volunteers are more likely to donate to charities. Some recent trends indicating a declining rate of volunteerism are a cause for concern. They suggest an urgent need to gather better data on the non-stipend volunteer force and invest more proactively in efforts to strengthen this vital component of the larger sector “workforce.” In the nearest term, we urge policymakers to **strengthen the capacity of the nation’s volunteer force, including by raising the charitable mileage rate to match that of businesses**.

National service not only expands the scope and impact of nonprofit work. It also often serves as a pipeline to train individuals for careers in the nonprofit sector. **We call for consistent, robust funding for AmeriCorps**; the establishment of a Civilian Climate Corps; growing the number of funded AmeriCorps positions; increasing the living allowance; and expanding participation by members of low-income and underrepresented communities.

### Conducive, Enabling Environment

Nonprofit organizations are more effective than anyone in getting people to the polls to vote. They do this through nonpartisan voter engagement and education – and it is our superpower as a sector. And we should all be able to agree that one critical measure of the health of civil society and of American democracy is the degree to which all people are voting, especially in communities of color that have encountered historical obstacles to exercising this most basic American right. While we are clear that major movement on voting rights could be difficult in a divided Congress, **we nonetheless call upon our legislators to reintroduce the [John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act](#) in the 118th Congress and ensure an open vigorous debate and a vote on this critical piece of legislation.**

Public Service Loan Forgiveness helps nonprofit organizations by allowing them to compete for critical staff and reducing turnover. The program makes it more affordable to work in the nonprofit sector by lessening the burden of student loans. As a result, nonprofits are able to recruit a more diverse workforce that better reflects the communities that they serve. **We will strongly oppose efforts to end the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program.**

Many of the most important social movements in our history have been born in the parks and public spaces that are accessible to all people. For this reason, **we believe that parks and healthy, public spaces play a critically important role, not only in growing healthy children and communities, but often in serving as the stage for civic debate, growing social movements, and emerging nonprofit leaders. We therefore call upon the Congress to pass the bipartisan [Outdoors for All Act](#).**

## Joining the NIC

Any nonprofit organization committed to mobilizing in support of policies that build a healthier, more equitable nonprofit sector is welcome to explore and join the NIC. There are no fees or Independent Sector membership requirements needed to join.

The coalition meets monthly and those interested in additional information can reach out to Jeff Moore at Independent Sector ([jeffreym@independentsector.org](mailto:jeffreym@independentsector.org)) or Ronda Jackson at KABOOM! ([rjackson@kaboom.org](mailto:rjackson@kaboom.org)) You can find additional information on the NIC and its membership on [Independent Sector's website](#).

**We are stronger with you than without – and welcome you into our coalition.**

