



# The Nonprofit Impact Pledge: From Nonprofits to the People and Communities We Serve

To our communities and all those who benefit from the work of nonprofits in America,

Our country is at a turning point, and so is the nonprofit sector. The disparate economic and social fallout from COVID-19 and the widespread reckoning with racial justice have put a spotlight on many long-standing problems with philanthropy and with the way nonprofits work. We cannot avoid these problems any longer, nor do we wish for things to return “to normal.” Our old way of existence, and many of our sector’s past practices for collaborating with funders, donors and our communities (while often well-intentioned), are broken. Instead, we wish to create a new future for the nonprofit sector, for the good of all.

As our country starts down the long road toward recovery from a tumultuous 2020, [demand for our services continues to grow](#), [resources continue to shrink](#), and [outmoded systems and ways of thinking](#) seem determined to keep our impact small. It has never been more challenging to run and sustain an effective nonprofit organization, but it has also never been more important, and we will rise up in the face of these challenges.

That is why we take this pledge and double down on these 10 commitments to you, the people and communities we work with. We also ask our donors, funders and those who support the sector [to make a similar set of commitments to us](#). **Together, we can create a better future for our sector, for the good of all.**



### **Commitment 1**

#### **We will collaborate, not compete.**

We recognize that we can do more good for our communities together than we can do alone. We will focus our efforts on making a specific contribution that only our organization can make, and when we encounter other organizations doing similar work, we commit to closely collaborating, partnering or merging with them rather than competing in an effort to maximize our collective impact.

### **Commitment 2**

#### **We will be guided by our mission, vision and values.**

We reaffirm that our mission, vision, and values are the compass that guides every decision we make. Though we recognize our need to adapt and pivot based on changing circumstances and the needs of those we serve, by putting these elements at the center of what we do, we will always focus on what matters most.

### **Commitment 3**

#### **We will center equity and racial justice in our work.**

We continue to recognize systemic racism and widespread, long-held inequities as the root causes that make much of our work (and the work of the nonprofit sector at large) necessary. We commit to doing everything we can to create opportunity and advance equity for Black people, indigenous people and people of color, LGBTQ+ individuals, those living with disabilities, women, immigrants, and other folks who are often marginalized. We will take a stand for what we believe in, call out racism, inequities, and bigotry whenever and wherever we see it, end white donor-centerism and prioritize action over intention.

### **Commitment 4**

#### **We will do our part to foster healthy relationships between nonprofits, donors and funders.**

We will welcome donors and funders who are aligned with our mission, vision, and values. We will advocate for funding practices that provide the resources we need to do effective work for the good of our communities. This includes everything from celebrating funders whose decision-making is not driven by overhead concerns, burdensome grant applications, or reporting requirements that drill down to minutiae, and who instead are transparent in their funding process, partner with us in



problem-solving for the sake of the community, and understand that multi-year unrestricted funding has the best opportunity for the most significant impact and outcomes.

### **Commitment 5**

**We will have a plan, and we will know when to re-evaluate it.**

We refuse to make the many challenges facing our organizations and the uncertain environment in which we exist an excuse for our inability to focus on what matters most to our communities or our failure to plan proactively for the future. We will operate with a strategic plan and clear set of goals always in place, but we'll also make sure that plan remains agile and responsive to the ever-changing needs of you, the people and communities we work with.

### **Commitment 6**

**We will ensure the people and communities we work with have the power to shape our priorities.**

We will put an end to all forms of savior-ism, recognizing that the power to chart our organization's direction can't rest with our funders, leadership and board alone. Instead, we commit to distributing that power to you, the people and communities we work with, and as we do, amplifying the voices of people who hold marginalized identities. We will ask for and listen to your input, feedback and opinions every step of the way.

### **Commitment 7**

**We will ensure we are known among and accessible to those who need our services and those who can support our work.**

We know we cannot maximize our potential for impact until our organization is known among, respected by and accessible to the people we exist to serve, and the donors and funders who support us. We therefore commit to investing in our organizations' brands, marketing and fundraising at a level that corresponds with the impact we hope to make.

### **Commitment 8**

**We will prioritize our staff and volunteers.**

We recognize that our organization must have a healthy, diverse, inclusive and fully supported team of staff and volunteers in order to advance its mission. We reject the idea that burnout, undermarket compensation and limited opportunities for advancement are



“just part of working for a nonprofit” and commit to prioritizing the personal and professional wellbeing of everyone who contributes to our work.

### Commitment 9

#### **We will redefine what success looks like and hold ourselves accountable to our communities.**

We commit to breaking free from false metrics for nonprofit success such as overhead ratios, dollars raised or people served, and instead commit to measuring our true impact and holding ourselves accountable to you, the people and communities we serve.

### Commitment 10

#### **We will prioritize action over intention.**

We know our words, statements of solidarity, and even these commitments only go so far. We will therefore continually prioritize action over intention. We will show up to work every day and take meaningful steps forward to respond to what you, our communities, are telling us you need from us. We will share our progress and our missteps transparently, and make continual adjustments to the way we work, for the good of all.

For many of us, these commitments do not represent new ideas or epiphanies. They have long been central tenants of our work. But by making them clearly and explicitly, and signing our names to this pledge, we aim to leave no doubt about what we stand for or about what we expect from our colleagues at other organizations.

We ask you humbly to join us in this quest for a better future for the nonprofit sector, and welcome your feedback on these commitments. We also ask you to pass this letter along to other nonprofits you support so they can join us in taking this pledge, and encourage you to share [its counterpart](#) with funders and donors who are making similar commitments alongside us.

Sincerely,

Nonprofits of America

 [Sign The Pledge](#)