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Kentucky nonprofits call on congressional delegation to act now on bipartisan solutions to meet urgent needs of Kentuckians and organizations serving them

(LEXINGTON, Ky.—) Nonprofit leaders from across Kentucky held a press conference today calling on Kentucky’s congressional delegation to move swiftly to pass another robust COVID-19 relief package of aid to state and local governments; direct supports for people; and relief for nonprofits working on the frontlines to serve Kentucky communities. The press conference was hosted by [Kentucky Nonprofit Network](#), the state association of nonprofits, and members of their Advocacy Alliance: [Association of Independent Kentucky Colleges & Universities](#), [Family & Children’s Place](#), [Fund for the Arts](#), [Goodwill Industries of Kentucky](#), [Homeless and Housing Coalition of Kentucky](#), [Hosparus Health](#), [Kentucky Coalition Against Domestic Violence](#), [Kentucky Voices for Health](#), [Kentucky YMCA State Alliance](#), [LexArts](#), [Markey Cancer Foundation](#), [Metro United Way](#), [Mountain Comprehensive Care Center](#), [New Vista](#), [Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky](#), [The Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence](#).

Nonprofit leaders and Kentuckians discussed the urgent need for additional federal relief to address food and housing insecurity, health care, childcare, education and more, noting that Kentuckians are suffering, and nonprofits’ ability to help meet their basic needs is in jeopardy if Congress fails to act soon.

“This pandemic has put an extraordinary strain on our state and local budgets along with the community health centers, rural health clinics, community mental health centers, local health departments and hospitals that serve every single one of us,” said Emily Beauregard, executive

director of Kentucky Voices for Health. “The fact is that the majority of our healthcare safety-net providers are nonprofits running on tight margins that couldn’t keep their lights on without Medicaid reimbursement. If Congress doesn’t act soon, the pressure on our budget could result in cuts to Medicaid and other vital safety-net programs at a time when Kentuckians most need them to get through this crisis healthy and whole.”

Dr. Sheila Schuster, psychologist and executive director of the **Advocacy Action Network** also noted a silent pandemic in Kentucky – the mental health pandemic – that must be treated, just as we are treating the physical impact of the COVID-19 virus. “Congress must absolutely act now with funding to make sure that our community’s public safety net of treating, supporting, life-sustaining agencies like the community mental health centers are there to help Kentuckians to survive and thrive,” said Dr. Schuster.

The importance of childcare, both for nonprofit childcare providers and for the nonprofit and for-profit workforce was also addressed. “Without an urgent investment of \$50 billion in childcare, Kentucky will continue to have children without care, parents without options, and businesses without employees,” said Mandy Simpson, director of public policy for **Metro United Way** in Louisville. Kristen Walker Collins of Perry County, a nonprofit executive with the **Foundation for Appalachian Kentucky** and parent of two small children, shared the excruciating decisions facing many families who must return to work; fear for their family’s safety; and are struggling to find childcare at all. “We implore Leader McConnell and Kentucky’s congressional delegation to come back to the negotiating table and work together now on the moral, educational, and economic imperative to prevent the permanent erosion of our childcare sector—which is the workforce behind the workforce,” Simpson added.

Education and broadband internet were also discussed on the call. “We ask today that members of Congress support Kentucky’s nonprofits in future stimulus packages so they can continue to provide the human services that Kentuckians so desperately need in this difficult time,” said **Prichard Committee of Academic Excellence** President & CEO Brigitte Blom Ramsey. “We would also remind our leaders that funding for broadband internet and its infrastructure is imperative to support remote learning, remote work, and remote access to healthcare through the pandemic and beyond.”

KNN's CEO, Danielle Clore outlined four sector-wide asks of Congress:

1. **Continue Emergency Funding Programs** by enabling a second round of Paycheck Protection Program loans and appropriating funds for federal grant programs to state and local governments that depend on nonprofits to deliver services to the public.
2. **Strengthen Charitable Giving Incentive** by expanding the above-the-line charitable deduction in the CARES Act from \$300 in 2020 to about \$4,000/individual in 2020 and 2021 so the incentive is universally available to all Americans, not just the wealthy.
3. **Provide Full Federal Unemployment Coverage** for self-insured (reimbursing) nonprofits by increasing the federal unemployment insurance reimbursement from 50 percent to 100 percent of costs.
4. **Extend Loan Programs to Mid-Sized and Larger Nonprofits** with more than 500 employees, because the CARES Act largely excluded them.

Clore noted: "The bipartisan CARES Act, enacted in March, was a lifeline for Kentuckians and the nonprofit and business communities – it saved many nonprofits from closing their doors. At that time, everyone thought the virus would fade in a few months. Of course, it hasn't and our lives and the economy remain at risk. Our communities need help, and they need it now – we need Congress' support." The nonprofit leaders on the call echoed the importance of the sector's priorities.

KNN member, **Family & Children's Place** has been helping kids and families for 137 years and, as with many human service providers, their work has not stopped. "Our Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan saved us through August. And now our future revenues are uncertain," said Pam Darnall, President & CEO. "We implore Congress to work together to make sure there is additional and flexible PPP funding for us and for all nonprofits – without additional relief, many organizations providing critical services that sustain life in our community will have to close their doors."

While the importance of arts and culture nonprofits is often overlooked, Christen Boone of **Fund for the Arts** pointed out that these organizations are crucial for our quality of life and our economic health, with Kentucky arts organizations returning \$4.7 million in federal taxes and \$1.5 million in state taxes annually. "Closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in crippling losses in revenue," said Boone. She also urged Congress to remember the importance of philanthropy and their ability to encourage people to donate to causes they care about. "The CARES Act provided a small tax incentive for charitable giving, but to really make a difference, an increase in this incentive is needed. Nonprofits need private donations now more than ever and we need real solutions that

encourage Kentuckians and Americans to support the causes that are important to them,” added Boone.

Clore reported that hundreds of Kentucky nonprofits have sent letters to Kentucky’s Congressional delegation in [April](#), [June](#) and [July](#) and are regularly emailing, calling and using social media to tell the story of the nonprofit sector and the Kentuckians they serve. She noted that Kentucky is in a unique position with two members of our delegation in leadership roles that could make a difference in moving negotiations forward – Senator Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader, and third-district Congressman John Yarmuth, House Budget Chairman.

"All Kentucky nonprofits are stepping up in this new post-COVID environment, including YMCA's who are providing valuable services to support the new non-traditional instruction (NTI) school calendar," said David Ozmore, executive director of **Kentucky Alliance of YMCA's**. Ozmore shared that the YMCA's in Kentucky, among the many nonprofits that self-insure for their unemployment insurance, collectively owe over \$4 million - even after the fifty percent relief provided by the CARES Act. He urged full federal unemployment coverage, noting that "nonprofits love to serve and we will continue to step up. We simply need help and we need our delegation to step up too."

Heather Anderson, a liaison with the Paducah Public Schools who works directly with homeless students to connect them to the resources needed for housing, food, health care and more explained that “this issue is not a partisan one. It is a human issue. And for our students and their families to be successful, their basic needs must be met.” Noting the need for strong partnerships, Anderson added, “we are stronger together.”

Clore emphasized the urgency of the situation facing nonprofits and Kentuckians and called on Kentucky's federal delegation to act now. “We urge of Kentucky’s congressional delegation to not give up on Kentucky,” said Clore. “Their good work from the CARES Act must continue and they must move swiftly to include the bipartisan solutions needed by the nonprofits serving Kentuckians. As was heard today, the needs are urgent – Kentucky, and our nation, simply cannot wait.

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