LGA COVID-19 PRIMER

A Crisis Management Toolkit for Enterprising Families: Section 4: Philanthropic Response

March 20, 2020
Ashley Blanchard, Philanthropy Practice Leader
COVID-19: What can Philanthropy do?

THE WORLD HAS NEVER RESPONDED TO ANYTHING LIKE THIS BEFORE

- We are seeing an unprecedented response in “philanthropy” in the truest sense: “the desire to promote the welfare of others.”
- Private philanthropy has a unique role to play: to bridge gaps, catalyze action, coordinate response, meet immediate needs and maintain long-term focus.
- Funders must get comfortable acting in absence of perfect information and in the face of great uncertainty.
- COVID-19 cuts across all program areas, ideologies, populations, giving strategies: whatever you care about, it is being affected by this pandemic—and there’s a way to help.
- For family philanthropies, responding together to a crisis which affects everyone can provide a unifying experience and shared sense of gratitude.
SOME PRINCIPLES FOR GIVING IN TIMES OF CRISIS

1. Take the long view: Remember that it will take some time for the full range of needs to emerge. It’s important to meet immediate needs—and also important to plan for the recovery that will follow, when philanthropic resources will become scarcer.

2. Remain flexible: Organizations need unrestricted operating funds to meet the constantly changing environment.

3. Fund the gaps: Private funders have opportunities to develop innovative solutions to help with recovery and to mitigate future disasters. They can be nimble and risk-tolerant in ways government agencies cannot.

4. Collaborate: Collaborative philanthropic response leverages combined expertise and maximizes the value of the donated human, financial and technical resources. Support local community foundations and regional associations so that they can coordinate the philanthropic response.

5. Fund close to the ground: While major disaster-relief NGOs play important roles in meeting immediate needs, a strong and stable nonprofit community is critical to long-term recovery. These organizations have close relationships with affected populations—they know what their community needs and are often the first places residents turn. Prioritize support to local organizations—or larger NGOs that work closely with them.

6. Fund vulnerable populations: While we may all feel the impact of a disaster, the most marginalized are disproportionately affected. This includes low-income, elderly, health-compromised, disabled and other minority populations. Focus support on efforts to meet their immediate and longer-term needs.

7. Talk to your grantees: Disasters are a time of great anxiety for already-stretched nonprofits. Ask your partners what they need and how you can help. Assure them—if possible—that you’ll be there to keep the work going.

8. Dig deep: See if you can free up additional funding for relief and recovery efforts.

Context: Best Practices in Disaster Giving

Adapted from Center for Disaster Philanthropy
AS DISEASE SPREADS, SO HAVE RESPONDING ORGANIZATIONS

- **Capital needs:** Many health clinics will not have the ability to make significant capital purchases necessary to respond to this crisis. This includes essential personal protective equipment, diagnostic and treatment equipment (e.g., ventilators, portable x-ray machines, etc.) While there is a supply shortage at the moment, resources will be needed to procure items when they become available.

- **Support for quarantined individuals.** Extended quarantines and community shut-downs mean that people—especially vulnerable populations—cannot work, shop for necessities or connect with others. In the immediate term, they need access to necessities to get through this period; in the long-term they will need support for lost income, housing and employment.

- **Access to health care:** People without access to regular medical care are more prone to existing medical needs that make them more susceptible to COVID-19. Health care service providers working with these populations are disproportionately overwhelmed by demand and under-resourced.

- **Mental health:** Long-term isolation is likely to have devastating mental health implications, especially for vulnerable populations like the elderly. Organizations are scrambling to figure out ways to meet the immediate and longer-term mental health needs that will result from this pandemic.

*Adapted from Center for Disaster Philanthropy*
• **Advocacy**: Private philanthropy can play an important role in encouraging corporate and governmental action, especially to aid the most vulnerable. This can include encouraging businesses to change their PTO policies to extend sick leave benefits or supporting policies that mandate no evictions or utility shutoffs (including phone and internet) during a quarantine.

• **WASH efforts**: Access to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) is key to limiting the spread of COVID-19. Many organizations are already focused on this work and are adapting their foci to prevent the spread of the pandemic in developing nations.

• **Research into COVID-19**: Significant research into vaccines and antivirals will be needed in order to achieve breakthroughs that may help save lives. It will also be important to ensure that vaccines and antivirals are accessible to even the poorest countries and not amassed by wealthier nations.
Develop your own plan: Foundations need a plan for supporting their staff and keeping the work going. Plan for frequent meetings of the leadership to make rapid decisions as things unfold.

Re-granting intermediaries: Places like the Center for Disaster Philanthropy’s COVID-19 Response Fund and funds at local community foundations provide an opportunity for donors to meet the ongoing and ever-expanding challenges presented by this virus, pooling their resources with others and relying on the expertise of professional grantmakers to identify the most appropriate opportunities.

Local NGOs: Think about the local NGOs that you already support in the areas of housing/homelessness, healthcare, nutrition/food support, mental health, domestic violence, care for seniors etc. There is going to be an increased need for their services during and after this outbreak.

Give internationally: This is an ongoing, international epidemic. While we are feeling the affects in the U.S., many countries do not have the resources of U.S.-based organizations; slowing the spread in developing nations will be critical to mitigating the pandemic. They are also harder to give to, so look for the large international funds or organizations that already have a presence and are working in these countries.
IN A TIME OF FEAR, POWERLESSNESS AND ISOLATION, FAMILY PHILANTHROPY OFFERS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

Family philanthropy is more nimble, risk-tolerant and community-connected than much other philanthropy. This crisis provides an opportunity for families to step up in a unified manner. Consider doing the following with your family philanthropy:

**Find opportunities for connection**

People are eager for virtual connection, and family philanthropy offers that opportunity. Set up meetings for your board/family to discuss the crisis: the needs they see in their community, ideas about possible funding opportunities, etc.

**Provide flexible and immediate funding**

Allocate money—now—to this crisis (and more down the road). This could include increasing grants to existing grantees, new efforts focused on COVID-19, and/or discretionary funds for family stakeholders to act locally.

**Delegate authority**

A crisis like this highlights the need for a process that allows foundations to act quickly. Make sure there’s a way for that to happen: delegate authority to staff or a smaller sub-group of the board to make decisions; ensure you’re set up for electronic voting, etc.
Resources: Philanthropic Response to COVID-19

- Center for Disaster Philanthropy
- Candid blog on Philanthropic Giving to COVID-19.
- National Council of Nonprofits: The Nonprofit Community Confronts the Coronavirus.
- The Chronicle of Philanthropy: 6 Steps for Grant Makers to Take Now to Ensure Nonprofits Recover from Coronavirus Spread.
- Northern California Grantmakers: Guidance for Philanthropic Communications in a Pandemic. Guidelines and tips for foundations to communicate with external stakeholders at this time.
- Bill Gates: How to respond to COVID-19.
We would love to hear about your own response to the crisis so we can aggregate and share with other enterprising families around the world as we all brace for a few tough months ahead.

We would be happy to schedule a phone or video call to discuss.

Feel free to contact Ashley Blanchard, our LGA Philanthropy Practice leader at Blanchard@lgassoc.com or 1.203.497.8855

Additional resources on Philanthropy for Enterprising Families and information about the rest of our services and global advisory team available at www.lgassoc.com
These materials and the accompanying presentation are the proprietary work of Lansberg, Gersick & Associates ("LGA").

None of our work should be construed as legal, financial, accounting or investment advice. However, since our services relate to governance of family enterprise, many of the topics covered in our projects have implications for corporate operations and finance. Therefore LGA urges all of our client families to consult with relevant licensed professionals in each of these fields before implementing any recommendations or suggestions developed by LGA in connection with our work.

In particular, LGA strongly recommends that the client family consult with legal counsel with respect to all legal matters. We specifically do not make legal or investment recommendations, and in no case should any of our work be relied upon as a substitute for qualified legal guidance.