



Semiannual Report to Charles County Commissioners July – December 2020

During the second half of 2020, the Nonprofit Institute continued working in a remote environment and met the continued increasing needs and requests for services from nonprofits in Charles County and the entire Southern Maryland region.

As noted in our previous report, the Nonprofit Institute quickly transitioned at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and began offering services remotely. With the United Ways of Charles and St. Mary's Counties, we continued offering weekly nonprofit community calls, eventually moving to a biweekly schedule toward the end of the year. These calls provide a collaborative space to update one another on the availability of resources, partnership opportunities, and useful statistical information. These calls have solidified the nonprofit sector in myriad ways that will likely remain long after the pandemic is behind us.

We offered training opportunities maximizing the use of virtual meetings and classes, and we continually updated our [COVID-19 Resources](#) and grant website pages to provide nonprofits with the most relevant and timely resources including grant opportunities, tools, guidance, free webinars, training workshops, and more. This information was updated regularly to offer the nonprofit community a one-stop shop for local and regional resources to save time and manpower.

Strategy One: Ensure Value of Training Provided by the Nonprofit Institute

Our offerings have remained free throughout 2020 to ensure the nonprofit community has access to critical information to navigate through the challenges posed by the pandemic in real time. While we normally do not hold classes during the summer months, the lack of training for local nonprofits during this period motivated us to schedule virtual classes via Zoom to fill the gap.

Our first class, *Protection Your Organization*, was held on July 23. The instructors for this class were CPAs from Askey, Askey, and Associates.

The 15th Annual Grants Training Workshop in September was offered for the first time as a virtual webinar with 74 attendees (147 registrations). *Roadmap to Success* was led by Jennifer Jones, CEO and Founder of KyJour International.

Our classes during the second half of 2020 included *Managing in Today's World*, and *Vision in Fundraising: Nonprofit Sustainability*. All were well attended by nonprofit staff and volunteers from throughout Southern Maryland.

We also facilitated an information session in December with the Catalogue for Philanthropy. Nonprofits from Charles County with annual operating budgets between \$100,000 - \$4 million are eligible to apply for inclusion in the Catalogue – the Washington, D.C. region's only locally focused guide to giving. Being a

part of the Catalogue creates visibility for nonprofits and opens opportunities for philanthropic dollars not otherwise available.

Feedback from our classes, the workshop, and the information session overall was largely positive, with many expressing appreciation for the course content, trainers, accessibility, and collaborative opportunities. The demands on the nonprofit community are great and most operate with skeletal staff, so the Nonprofit Institute's ability to offer critical resources in real time has been very well-received.

Strategy Two: Measure the Effectiveness of the Nonprofit Institute's Marketing Efforts

The second half of the year saw a continued increase in engagement with the Nonprofit Institute. We saw continued growth of visits to our website, specifically a 55% increase in page views compared to the same period in 2019. Our COVID-19 Resource page had the highest traffic, demonstrating the interest in and need for information, guidance, and resources. The Nonprofit Institute established this resource as a central source of nonprofit-specific opportunities including relief grants, networking calls, free webinars, PPE suppliers, guidance, etc. Through weekly community calls, affinity group meetings, weekly email updates, and social media activity, nonprofits were encouraged to consult this resource often. The increase in web traffic demonstrates they did.

Having moved from monthly newsletters to weekly emails at the onset of the pandemic, we transitioned back to monthly newsletters. New subscribers are added weekly.

Content on the Nonprofit Institute's web pages and social media accounts is updated and refreshed on a regular basis. Social media includes Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Social media platforms are used to promote the e-newsletter, classes, and events, to share nonprofits' Facebook postings and Tweets, and to share grant opportunities, free webinars, and articles of interest. These can be found at:

- www.facebook.com/NonprofitInstituteCSM/
- Twitter: @NonprofitInsCSM
- www.linkedin.com/company/nonprofit-institute-at-csm/

Additionally, a Nonprofit Institute group page on Facebook allows nonprofits to post and share information. Several organizations use it regularly as part of their marketing and promotional outreach.

Strategy Three: Measure the Effectiveness of the Annual Conference

Planning for the 11th Annual Nonprofit Institute Conference began in September. The conference is scheduled for Feb. 25, 2021 and it will be virtual. The theme is "Nonprofit Resilience: Adapting to Change." Our keynote speaker and breakout sessions will tie this theme to the sessions which focus on five tracks - leadership, strategic planning, management, fundraising, and communications.

Attracting speakers from throughout the country is an unexpected advantage of a virtual conference. This year we have two speakers located on the west coast. In addition to CSM President Dr. Maureen Murphy, who will provide welcoming remarks, Sybol Anderson, Executive Director for Equity and Inclusive Diversity at CSM, will be this year's keynote speaker.

Strategy Four: Review and Enhance the Effectiveness of Current Activities

We regularly hold meetings for nonprofits on a range of interest areas. Participation in these meetings continues at the highest levels in the history of the Institute. People who attend include paid staff, volunteers, board members, and others with a role in nonprofit and community organizations. As we noted in our previous report, we anticipate hosting these meetings via Zoom for the foreseeable future and with a Zoom option when we return to in-person gatherings.

Supporting/Assisting Nonprofits

As noted previously, the Institute began hosting weekly calls with the United Way of Charles County in mid-March. The first few calls had more than 100 people, representing nonprofits throughout Southern Maryland. These calls continued weekly until the late fall when we transitioned to monthly calls. We also host a call with the United Way of St. Mary's County. We see good participation, engagement, and collaboration on these community calls. Fostering this collaboration helps strengthen the nonprofit sector. Notably, a lasting feature of these meetings is the comradery that has deepened within the region's nonprofit community.

Requests for assistance and consultation on a range of interests continue at peak levels. Also during this reporting period, the Nonprofit Institute team provided one-on-one support and assistance to 43 individuals seeking to start a nonprofit.

Volunteer Coordinators

Prior to Maryland's state of emergency, the volunteer coordinators' meeting was held quarterly. The COVID-19 pandemic and resulting social distancing requirements made attracting and retaining volunteers even more difficult so the group met biweekly from July through October and now meets monthly. During these virtual meetings, coordinators shared best practices and discussed innovative approaches to engage and recognize volunteers thereby maintaining and strengthening the individuals' continuing connection to the nonprofit.

Fundraising Professionals Network Meeting

This quarterly networking meeting pivoted to a biweekly meeting for a few months and now meets monthly via Zoom. Numerous federal, state, and local COVID relief grants and loans became available with the declared state of emergency. These calls involve information sharing, including free online resources to find relevant grants, how to research funders, and the use of language and terminology that is important to infuse for grant submissions. Grant research and writing is extremely time-consuming, so the Nonprofit Institute provides this expertise and hands-on support.

Michelle Sullivan is NPI's expert on identifying and preparing funding applications. During the biweekly Fundraising Professionals Network meetings, she helped nonprofits tackle complicated loan applications, such as that for the federal Paycheck Protection Program. As some COVID-related funding opportunities become more scarce, Michelle is helping them think through the post-pandemic challenges and emerging themes of grant funding, including housing and green jobs.

PR/Marketing/Communications Network

With group events such as fundraisers and festivals on hold, marketing, communications, and outreach requires creativity and persistence. Sharing the stories of a nonprofit's work, service, and presence is crucial. Much of this activity has moved online.

This group met weekly for most of the second half of 2020 and now meets monthly. A core group of a dozen people working in various capacities for nonprofits participate regularly for discussion, collaboration, and networking. Several guests joined us throughout this period including the executive editor of Southern Maryland News, a strategic communication professional from a local defense contractor, a videographer, and a podcast producer.

Executive Director Roundtables

These meetings are on hold due to the need to hold the larger nonprofit community calls.

Strategy Five: New Initiatives

New Appointment

Kyle Kebaugh joined the Nonprofit Institute in late 2020, one of several focus areas in his role as CSM Assistant Director of Strategic Initiatives. His appointment has created immediate benefits for the Institute including having a supervisor to manage and lead, providing direct support to each member of the staff, and offering a fresh perspective to our work.

Southern Maryland Nonprofit Directory

Work progressed on the Nonprofit Institute's efforts to develop an online, searchable database of the region's approximately 2,600 nonprofits serving Southern Maryland. The directory is intended to be searchable by one or more counties as well as by the type of work the nonprofit performs. Assembling a database of this size is a large task and we hope to launch the database by the 3rd quarter of 2021.

Partnerships/Collaborations

The Nonprofit Institute is represented on the **Charles County COVID-19 Recovery Task Force**, a group created by the Charles County Economic Development Advisory Board at the request of the Charles County Commissioners. The Institute's participation on this task force is to represent the Charles County nonprofit sector. Having this voice has thus far proven to be very helpful for the nonprofit community. The collaboration and conversation was robust and fruitful, leading to several immediate outcomes as well as long-term recommendations. The Task Force's work is complete and its report is pending. A summary preview of the Task Force's work is available on the [Economic Development Department website](#).

St. Mary's County Economic Development, Small Business Development Center and the Nonprofit Institute coordinator for St. Mary's County held weekly COVID-related conference calls. The county's Department of Economic Development administers the CARES Act funds for nonprofits and the Nonprofit assisted in the marketing of this funding opportunity.

The Nonprofit Institute helped plan a virtual **St. Mary's County Library** program focusing on resources for nonprofits. Robin Finnacom was a participant on the panel discussion with representatives of three St. Mary's County nonprofits including Christmas in April, Boundless Expectations, and the Friends of the

Library. The program is scheduled for Jan. 6, 2021 and will be recorded and posted to the library's website.

The Institute collaborated with **Leadership Southern Maryland** (LSM) to identify volunteer opportunities for members of the incoming class. Robin Finnacom attended the LSM's Class of 2021 orientation held in September to present these volunteer opportunities and to describe what the Institute does to support nonprofits throughout the region.

Nonprofit Institute at CSM
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