



**Nonprofit Institute at College of Southern Maryland
Semiannual Report to St. Mary's County Government
July – December 2020**

The most notable accomplishment of this period was the ongoing success of the weekly, biweekly, and then monthly Nonprofit Institute and United Way virtual meetings held for the region's nonprofits. Furthermore, we reengaged nonprofits with training opportunities maximizing the use of virtual meetings and classes, and continually updated our [COVID-19 resources](#) and grant website pages to provide up to the minute information for nonprofits facing added expenses for personal protection equipment and cleaning while earning dramatically less income. Finally, planning for the Nonprofit Institute's 11th annual conference was initiated in the fall and nearly completed by the end of this period.

Strategy One: Ensure the value of training provide by the Nonprofit Institute

The Nonprofit Institute's spring classes were cancelled when CSM's campuses were closed in March 2020. While we normally do not hold classes during the summer months, the lack of training for local nonprofits during this bleak period motivated us to schedule virtual classes via Zoom to fill the gap.

Our first class, *Protection Your Organization*, was held on July 23. Twenty people registered for the 1.5-hour class which was offered free of charge as were the remainder of our classes in 2020. The instructors for this first class were CPA's from Askey, Askey and Associates, a well-known and highly respected company headquartered in Leonardtown.

On September 25, a three-hour grants training seminar called *Roadmap to Success* was held featuring Jennifer Jones, CEO and Founder of KyJour International, as the instructor. Seventy-four people attended this, our 15th Annual Grants Training Seminar.

In October, CPA's from Askey and Askey facilitated a 3.5-hour class called *Managing in Today's World – Fiscal Clarity*. While only seven people registered for the class, given the complexity of the subject matter, it allowed time for each to have their questions addressed more thoroughly.

Attendees of Nonprofit Institute's classes evaluate the training. Normally the evaluations are quite extensive as they cover everything from the instructor's knowledge, to accommodations, and suggestions for future training topics. With our virtual classes, we use a more simplified, four question form that is submitted electronically. Consistently, the Nonprofit Institute's training classes receive high marks from attendees.

Finishing up this reporting period, we held two training opportunities in November including a 3.5-hour class entitled *Vision in Fundraising – Nonprofit Sustainability* and a 1.5-hour *Catalogue for Philanthropy Information Session* with 35 and four registrants, respectively.

During the *Vision in Fundraising* class, we used Zoom breakout rooms for the first time. Improving our ability to use Zoom and webinar features has been a slow but steady learning experience for our instructors and staff as we strive to make training in a remote environment as engaging and as interactive as possible.

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

The second half of the year saw a continued increased 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 Nonprofit Institute’s Annual Conference

Significant planning for Nonprofit Institute’s February 25, 2021 annual conference was undertaken during this reporting period. This will be the Institute’s 11th conference. As with our classes, the conference will be virtual and offered free of charge.

The theme selected for the conference is *Nonprofit Resilience: Adapting to Change*. The conference will run from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Five tracks featuring three breakout session apiece will be offered including nonprofit: communications, development, management, strategic planning, and leadership. Speakers have been confirmed for each session and the development of marketing materials is now underway.

Attracting speakers from throughout the country is an unexpected advantage of a virtual conference and we have two speakers located on the west coast who will participate. In addition to CSM President, Dr. Maureen Murphy, who will provide welcoming remarks, Sybol Anderson, the College's executive director for Equity and Inclusive Diversity will keynote the conference.

Strategy Four: Review and Enhance the Effectiveness of Nonprofit Institute's Current Activities

Executive Director Roundtables

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

St. Mary's County Nonprofits and the United Way of St. Mary's

Since Maryland's state of emergency was imposed, the Nonprofit Institute, as stated above, replaced the monthly executive directors' roundtable meetings with weekly Zoom meetings held jointly with the United Way agencies in both Charles and St. Mary's County. These virtual meetings were open to nonprofit staff and leaders located throughout Southern Maryland. It was not uncommon for people to attend both county's meetings on a regular basis.

St. Mary's County's meetings ran weekly from April 23 through June 18. They then ran biweekly from June 25 through November 12 and now occur monthly. Zoom meetings with the United Way of Charles County followed roughly the same meeting pattern. Attendance for St. Mary's Zoom meetings averaged 8 – 12 people per meeting. The meetings in Charles County drew considerably larger numbers of attendees.

In addition to the United Way's support for St. Mary's Zoom meetings, key local and state staff participated as frequently as possible including the following individuals: Cynthia Brown, SMC Aging and Human Resources, Kate Meggert, SMC Public Schools, Charles Wood, MD Dept. of Human Services, Mary Ann Bowman, SMC Library, Tammy Loewe, Local Management Board, Wynne Briscoe, Southern Maryland Region Small Business Development Center, and Steve Wall, MD Department of Commerce.

A lasting feature of these meetings is the comradery that has deepened within the region's nonprofit community. Sharing the challenge and anxiety from closures, social distancing mandates, managing remote operations, staff and client sickness, the still unknown future for organizations, our community, and the country; all of these fears were acknowledged and individuals shared suggestions for coping during such a stressful time. In fact, one session of our Volunteer Coordinators' meeting was devoted to the discussion of self-care with Bonnie Elward, now of HHJoy, LLC leading an hour-long session on how to recognize and address the unique aspects of living in a COVID-19 world including the isolation and unrelenting fear.

Conversely, many of St. Mary's organizations were deemed essential. Three Oaks Center, St. Mary's Caring, A Community That Shares, and many others have been on the front lines addressing the increasing needs of families and individuals precipitated by the pandemic. While participation from these organizations with the Nonprofit Institute has been minimal as they are stretched thin, occasional emails and phone calls have maintained our connection to them.

As an outgrowth of these meetings, the Institute connected nonprofits to new and emerging supplies of personal protection equipment be it through the County's Department of Emergency Services or defense contractors such as J. F. Taylor or the University of Maryland's TechPort incubator. Furthermore, we

linked nonprofits to the Tobacco Barn Distillery and other distilleries that geared up to manufacture hand sanitizing lotions. As COVID-19 relief grants became available on the local, state, and federal level, we used the virtual meetings to review the funder's application and eligibility requirements, and, as in the case of the County's grant program, had Kellie Hinkle, Deputy Director, Economic Development provide an overview of the grant and address questions about the program on more than one occasion.

Supporting/Assisting Nonprofit

Request 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. Social distancing requirements and community-wide fear surrounding COVID-19 made attracting and retaining volunteers every 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. Understanding the regulations governing each funding source, navigating different grant portals, assembling necessary documents, and meeting incredibly short deadlines became an immense challenge for nonprofits as well as businesses.

Michelle Sullivan is the Institute'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, shared news on COVID related funding opportunities from corporations such as Hanes, kept everyone apprised of deadlines and any changes to grant eligibility requirements as happened more than once and even reviewed applications prior to submission. During this time of crisis, nonprofits have benefited greatly from such personal and hands-on support from our staff.

Public Relations/Marketing/Communications Network

With group events such as fundraisers and festivals on hold, marketing, communications, and outreach during 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.

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. It will include basic information about each nonprofit such as website links. While we had hoped to launch the directory in advance of Giving Tuesday (December 1, 2020), assembling a data base of this sized has proven to be quite difficult. We now hope to launch the database by the 3rd quarter of 2021.

Partnership and Collaboration

St. Mary's County Economic Development, SBDC and the coordinator for St. Mary's County began weekly COVID-related conference calls that are now hosted biweekly. SMC received a multimillion CARES Act grant for COVID emergency preparedness and response. Over two million dollars of that fund was dedicated to COVID relief grants for local businesses and nonprofits. The county's Department of Economic Development administers the fund. Both SBDC and the Institute provided input to the development of the grant application and assisted in marketing this funding opportunity. To date, 38 SMC nonprofits have each been awarded \$8,000 grants.

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](#).

Christin Biglin, Program Coordinator for **St. Mary's County Library** requested that NPI participate in a **virtual program** to promote the library's and the Institute's resources for nonprofits. Robin Finnacom participated in the planning of the program and will be interviewed during the virtual panel discussion scheduled for January 6, 2021. Representatives of three St. Mary's County nonprofits including Christmas in April, Boundless Expectations, and the Friends of the Library will also participate. The program will be recorded and eventually 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 LSM's Class of 2021's orientation held in September to present these volunteer opportunities and to describe what the Institute does to support nonprofits throughout the region.