REPOSITIONING FOR STRENGTH
The Northeast Florida Nonprofit Sector and COVID-19

Executive Summary

As federal, state and local governments made plans for a phased economic re-boot, the Nonprofit Center asked members of the local nonprofit sector to form a Working Group to examine best practices, pool resources and information, and create a knowledge center to support our community of businesses following the initial shockwave of the coronavirus in Northeast Florida. We also asked them to help us catalogue the radical shifts that have taken place in the few short months since the pandemic's landfall. The result is a living resource providing both practical guidance and profound learning for nonprofit businesses planning. This report aims to define a path forward for the next phases of work and service, divided into three sections:

1. Using NonprofitCtr.org/repositioning to provide information and resources to help nonprofit businesses manage phases of re-opening. Many nonprofits are at the center of the COVID-19 response, others are providing critical safety net services and facing escalating demand. But those that converted their work to remote or a hybrid of in-person and virtual, or temporarily closed, asked for resources to help when it comes time to participate in re-opening. The report tackles the urgent task of identifying and sourcing materials, guidance, tools, and policies nonprofits need to safely move back into their offices and engage with customers, clients, and the general public.

2. Catalogue lessons learned and practice improvements. Forced to transform business models almost overnight, flexibility, creativity, communication and collaboration emerged as crucial characteristics in the inherently risk-averse nonprofit culture. The report captures examples of new practices that have increased capacity and improved business for nonprofits.

3. Defining strategies for pursuing and promoting a "new normal." Nonprofits are influential and essential contributors to a healthy, equitable society and economy. This report begins the work of defining policies and resources needed to come back stronger, more resilient and more aware of and able to address inequities. Our recommendations include strengthening nonprofit/government partnerships; prioritizing testing and PPE for community, childcare, and healthcare employees; extending the State moratorium on evictions; permanently amending tele-health regulations; critically examining nonprofit compensation, governance, restructuring, and diversity practices and policies; and using data from CARES Act and local stimulus programs to better understand the viability of cash assistance programs as a consumer choice and empowerment tool.

A crisis of this magnitude requires focus on the super-short term, but we are obligated to chronicle what we are experiencing and learning for the long term. Regardless of the pace and success of economic re-ignition, millions of Americans have experienced health and financial setbacks that will have lasting ramifications. We offer these lessons, observations, and recommendations for action and advocacy. They are a first reflection on how an extraordinary crisis has changed nonprofit business practices now and in the future.
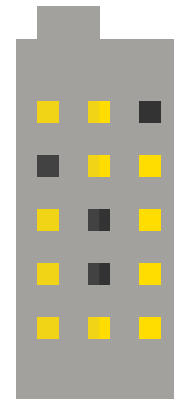
NonprofitCenter
of Northeast Florida

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As the COVID-19 pandemic began to affect Northeast Florida, it was clear that the impact on nonprofits would be far-reaching. Northeast Florida nonprofits provide vital services to individuals and families, and are essential to our community's quality of life.

The effects on nonprofit businesses quickly became measurable, as this Nonprofit Center survey from May demonstrates. Similar findings have been seen in national surveys of nonprofit businesses.

28% had to **cut hours** or **lay off staff**

31% experienced **increased demand** for services

28% lost revenue due to **reduced demand** for services

8 in 10 have applied for **PPP loans or other COVID-19 relief** funding

MORE THAN HALF lost revenue due to **cancelled fundraisers**

ONE THIRD reported difficulty operating in a **virtual environment**