



Human Services Chamber  
of Hamilton County

March 26, 2020

Board of Hamilton County Commissioners  
138 East Court Street, #603  
Cincinnati, OH 45202

Dear Honorable Commissioners:

First, thank you for your letter this week to U.S. Senators Brown and Portman urging that our human services nonprofits be included in COVID-19 economic stimulus legislation. At the time of this writing, the economic stimulus legislation that has been proposed in Congress does not include any direct funding for nonprofits; however, the bill does include emergency small business loans, tax credits, and charitable deductions that will provide some much-needed relief. It is too early to say whether this relief will be enough given the enormous challenges faced by our human services providers during this crisis.

I am writing to provide you an overview of how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting our local human services sector. The Human Services Chamber conducted a survey of 69 human services providers from March 20 – 25. These organizations range from small, neighborhood-based organizations to large organizations with annual budgets in excess of \$10M. Roughly half of the organizations who responded have annual budgets below \$5M. The organizations who participated in our survey provide a wide variety of services to our community, as represented in the table to the right. These services are critical to the well-being of our community and must be preserved if we are to weather this storm and prepare for the rebuilding process to follow.



**Survey Results:**

COVID-19 has greatly expanded the need for charitable organizations to provide additional services at a time when contributions and other sources of revenue are projected to plummet due to the economic downturn and social distancing measures.

**Financial Impacts:** Organizations are already experiencing significant revenue losses and these losses are projected to continue for at least the next 60 days. Human services providers rely on a combination of private contributions, public and private grants, and service fees for their operations. If these losses continue without substantial financial assistance, organizations will have difficulty paying staff and other debts and may ultimately be forced to reduce services.

- 47 organizations reported loss of fundraising revenue over the last 14 days; 54 expect losses to continue over the next two months.
- 41 organizations have had to cancel or postpone a fundraising event.



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- 39 respondents reported loss of revenues such as rents and fees for service over the last 14 days; 47 expect loss of these revenues over next 60 days.
- 14 respondents anticipate a loss of over 20% of their budgeted revenues over the next 60 days; 10 project a loss of over 30% of their budgeted revenues.
- 16 organizations anticipate a revenue loss of in excess of \$500K over the next 60 days.

Operating Impacts:

- 47 organizations representing the full spectrum of human services have been unable to deliver at least some services over the past two weeks; 54 anticipate that they will not be able to deliver services over the next few weeks.
- 35 organizations are already experiencing a lack of staffing; 43 expect staffing shortages over the next 60 days. Respondents reported that some staff are not able to work because their childcare provider has been closed.
- 17 organizations anticipate laying off or furloughing workers over the next 60 days; most respondents were unsure about the impact on their abilities to maintain staff.
- 36 respondents have experienced a lack of volunteers and expect this trend to continue in the near term. Volunteer needs have increased for many agencies. Needs include delivery of food and supplies, software training, and legal services. Some agencies have discontinued their volunteer operations due to concerns with spreading the virus.
- 25 organizations reported that they have been unable to obtain food or supplies (including cleaning supplies); 31 organizations expect that this issue will continue over the next several weeks.

Service Delivery Impacts:

- Food pantries and organizations that provide meals for seniors and other vulnerable populations are seeing a dramatic increase in need and are concerned they will not be able to meet demand due to lack of funding, staff and/or volunteers.
- Some organizations that provide in-home medical care or in-person support for domestic violence victims are unable to deliver their services because they do not have appropriate protective gear for their staff.
- Organizations that provide reentry services are seeing higher demand due to release of more people from jail.
- Workforce development programs and other supportive services have been suspended so that staff can respond to more critical needs of clients.
- Organizations that provide workforce training are having difficulty because clients do not have access to computers, software, smartphones or internet service.
- Those who provide shelter for people experiencing homelessness, addiction treatment or behavioral care services are concerned about keeping their staff and clients healthy while they are in their facilities.
- Some organizations are providing services such as behavioral health counseling and resource navigation remotely.



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Potential Impacts on Community:

- There will likely be an increased need for mental health services due to stress and isolation. Seniors, people with developmental disabilities and residents with mental illness or addiction are especially challenged.
- Staffing shortages in the home health care sector may threaten the safety of seniors and people with disabilities.
- Workers who lack access to childcare due to recent closures may lose their jobs.
- More families will need wraparound funding to support them due to job losses.
- The number of domestic violence victims is likely to increase. Violence including sexual assault is likely to increase due to isolation combined with increased stress in households.
- Potential for increase in homelessness in the year ahead due to lack of employment.
- Clients may not be able to pay delayed utility bills and rents after the moratorium on evictions is lifted.
- Many childcare programs will go out of business and not recover.
- Children will likely fall behind in their academics.

We will continue to monitor the service impacts and other challenges of our human services sector over the next several weeks and update you regularly. It is our hope that we can work closely together as this crisis progresses. Please feel free to contact me at any time for information or ideas on how we can respond to the community issues during this crisis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gina Marsh".

Executive Director  
ginamarsh@humanserviceschamber.org

cc: Jeff Aluotto, Hamilton County Administrator