

Media Contact

Ranggin Hedayat

Reveille, Inc.

949.394.1454

ranggin@reveilleinc.com**NEW ASSESSMENT BY RESILIENCE FUND CAPTURES IMPACT OF PANDEMIC ON LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND NONPROFITS***Philanthropy Continues to Play Key Role in Addressing Needs*

Newport Beach, Calif. (September 14, 2020) – The Orange County Community Resilience Fund (OCCRF), a partnership between the Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF), the St. Joseph Community Partnership Fund, Charitable Ventures and OC Grantmakers, has released an [Impact Assessment of the Pandemic on the Region’s Communities and Nonprofits](#). The Assessment – which examined feedback from local nonprofits, economic data, news stories, and reports from other organizations and resources – reveals much to be concerned about, but also shows optimism, adaptation and resilience in the regional nonprofit sector. The compiled data also indicates areas where the philanthropic community can best support recovery and long-term resilience, and build a constructive path forward.

“These findings reveal the devastating and enduring impact of COVID-19’s disruptions and closures on organizations and individuals throughout Orange County,” said Jason Lacsamana, senior program officer, St. Joseph Community Partnership Fund. “Individuals are facing unprecedented challenges and increased basic needs, while nonprofits are challenged with an overwhelming increase in demand for services and elevated costs; at the same time, their revenue has decreased as in-person events and contracts have been reduced or eliminated. The need for philanthropy to fill this gap is greater than ever.”

Assessment Finds Increase in Demand for Basic Needs, Including Mental Health Access

The assessment found a dramatic increase in demand for basic needs and the social safety net. Food banks reported a dramatic increase in demand and calls to 2-1-1 for social services referrals more than doubled.

In particular, lower-income families, communities of color and immigrants face the greatest health impact from COVID-19 and its related economic challenges (i.e., job loss and unemployment rates). For example, while only 35% of the county population is Hispanic/Latino, 56% of COVID-19 cases affect Hispanic/Latino residents. There is now widespread concern about a wave of evictions that will start once local, state and federal protections expire.

The pandemic has also had a significant impact on the physical and mental health of our community. Residents have delayed preventative services due to cost, availability or concerns about exposure to COVID-19. And mental health is a growing concern as stress, anxiety and depression build, and worries mount with people turning to unhealthy coping mechanisms. Thirty-five percent of survey respondents cited mental health as the most pressing issue they see in the community. Nonprofits are also concerned about the growing incidence of domestic violence that is going unreported as children lose their access to mandated reporters.

COVID-19's Impact on Nonprofits

For nonprofits, the Assessment showed the strain on organizations as they are being asked to mitigate issues while facing increased demand for services, decreased revenue and elevating costs to provide more basic needs supplies, remote services or increased safety measures: 94% of survey respondents report significant loss of revenue from fee-for-service, contracts, contributions and/or fundraisers. In response, 90% of nonprofits are increasing their grant writing efforts and 81% have increased their individual donation solicitations.

While the organizations that were surveyed were buoyed by the PPP Loan Program and reported that emergency philanthropic efforts have helped nonprofits weather the initial impact, they have still had to make difficult staffing decisions; 20% of survey respondents had to perform layoffs, with 49% of organizations cutting staffing through some combination of layoffs, furloughs and/or reducing hours.

Despite these challenges, nonprofits have responded with resilience and creativity. Seventy-five percent of organizations are now offering services online and 48% reported increasing the amount of services they provide, even in the face of reduced revenue.

“These nonprofits have been amazing at responding with a real spirit of innovation—reconfiguring services and events to remote delivery when possible and instituting social distancing and safety measures for in-person services,” said Paul Bonfanti, Charitable Ventures director of client services, and lead on the evaluation effort. “While many nonprofits are getting by as best they can, we are more concerned about smaller organizations with fewer resources, reserves and options to begin with—which were also less likely to get substantive relief from government and are at greater risk of facing closure.”

Philanthropy Addressing Needs of Community

The philanthropic community has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic quickly and strongly, with philanthropic initiatives driving over \$10M in direct support to nonprofits and individuals during this early response period. This emergency funding has kept many organizations afloat, but more is needed as we head into the next phase of response.

The Assessment recommends areas where philanthropy can effectively support nonprofits going forward. With an ongoing focus on collaboration among organizations to avoid duplication of services and realize operational efficiencies, the OCCRF Assessment recommends prioritizing communities with fewer resources and shoring up smaller yet critical organizations in danger of massive cuts or closure. The OCCRF's Assessment findings indicate the importance of providing safety net organizations and mental health providers with the resources to serve continuing increases in demand, as well as addressing the vital role of schools, youth programming and early childhood education. Finally, the Assessment also encourages specialized funding opportunities to focus on important subsectors such as arts and culture.

To learn more about the OCCRF and the Impact Assessment, visit www.charitableventuresoc.org/resiliencefund.

About the OC Community Resilience Fund

The Orange County Community Resilience Fund (OCCRF) was launched in March 2020 as a partnership between St. Joseph Community Partnership Fund, the Orange County Community Foundation, Charitable Ventures, and OC Grantmakers, and was designed to respond to the immediate and lasting impacts of COVID-19 in the region. As widespread shutdowns began in mid-March, OCCRF readied to

provide emergency grants to nonprofits impacted by COVID, and to nonprofits serving highly vulnerable individuals. By June, OCCRF had distributed \$4.3 million dollars to 164 Orange County nonprofit organizations.

About Orange County Community Foundation

Founded in 1989, the Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF) works with donors, strengthens the local nonprofit sector and works to find solutions to community needs. Since its inception, OCCF has awarded more than \$730 million in grants and scholarships and ranks in the top one percent in grantmaking activity among more than 780 U.S. community foundations. For more information, visit occf.org or call 949-553-4202. Be a part of our conversation on [Facebook](#) [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). View OCCF's 2019 annual report [here](#).

About St. Joseph Community Partnership Fund

The St. Joseph Community Partnership Fund makes strategic investments in the health and well-being of communities across the Western United States. The Fund works to reduce health disparities and promote equity by investing in systems-level impacts on community health issues, and strengthening partnerships and collaboration. Our investments fall into the following four categories: building capacity and partnerships, promoting justice and community leaders, investing in best practices and new ideas, and caring for the vulnerable. For more information, please visit: <http://stjosephcpf.org/>

About Charitable Ventures

Charitable Ventures was launched in 2007 to encourage the growth of innovative regional nonprofits and to build the capacity of the nonprofit sector. As a regional incubator, Charitable Ventures has fiscally sponsored more than 62 community projects and regional initiatives since inception. In 2020, Charitable Ventures anticipates sponsoring more than 35 active projects on track to raise between \$16 and \$20 million, and is the region's Administrative Community Based Organization for the 2020 Census. Visit charitableventuresoc.org for more information.

About Orange County Grantmakers

Orange County Grantmakers is a community of philanthropists committed to improving outcomes for Orange County and beyond. Our mission is to advance social impact by supporting, strengthening and building adaptive leadership across our nonprofit and philanthropic community.

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