May 4, 2021

Governor Pete Ricketts
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509-4848

Dear Governor Ricketts:

Since early 2020, communities across the state have been challenged by the pandemic and its impact. We've come together to address the challenges; community based nonprofits, government agencies and the business community working in partnership to meet unprecedented needs.

The Nonprofit Association of the Midlands (NAM) represents more than 13,000 nonprofit organizations in Nebraska. Our members—charitable nonprofits that exist to serve the public good and work directly with people with varying needs, see firsthand the impact the pandemic has had on people's lives. We believe it is critical for individuals and organizations to provide input on how the State of Nebraska will determine priorities and use of the $1.8 billion designated for our state from the American Rescue Plan.

Much needed resources from the American Rescue Plan Act are designed to help meet the needs that surfaced during the pandemic and offer the opportunity to ensure our state continues to offer the good life for all its residents. The American Rescue Plan makes clear that nonprofits are eligible for these funds in terms of grants, to pay for services and implement strategic investments in communities to drive sustainable change.

As plans develop on how best to use these funds it's critical that nonprofits be part of the decision-making process to ensure that community based nonprofits receive the resources needed to address community needs. Nonprofits are a critical element of our economy. Nonprofits offer services that the private sector cannot, and partner with government agencies as appropriate. Nonprofits employ 90,000 Nebraskans who work every day to improve and enhance community life.
Nonprofit organizations have been the first responders meeting many urgent needs that faced our cities and towns this past year including sky-rocketing numbers in food insecurity and hunger; needs in health care -- mental, physical, and dental; safe and affordable housing needs, including rent and utility assistance; quality and affordable child-care; and lack of technology and access to the internet, to name a few. Even today, these needs continue to rise and will continue to for years to come.

Nebraskans who never needed help before were served by nonprofits, and low wage earners who struggled pre-pandemic are in still in crisis. Nonprofits are part of community collaboratives across the state and work with others to meet the urgent needs of children and families.

All nonprofits have been adversely impacted by the pandemic, the resulting economic recession, and racial inequity -- intensifying the need for community-based services. Millions of dollars in revenue from cancelled fundraising events, live performances, and retail products and services were lost. We know that it took years for many nonprofits to recover following the great recession and know this is true with this crisis.

It’s crucial that nonprofits be part of the decision-making process as determination are made on how funds from the American Rescue Plan are allocated to ensure Nebraskans get the services and help they need during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Anne Hindery, CEO

Attachment: Playbook Updates NCFF

C: Appropriation Committee:
Senator John Stinner
Senator Robert Clements
Senator Myron Dorn
Senator Steve Erdman
Senator Robert Hilkemann
Senator Mark Kolterman
Senator Mike McDonnell
Senator Tony Vargas
Senator Anna Wishart