

Presidential Candidate Questionnaire – 2020 Election

Independent Sector—the nation’s leading coalition of public charities, private foundations, and corporate philanthropy programs—requests your answers to the following questionnaire. Since our founding in 1980, we have advanced the common good by leading, strengthening, and mobilizing the charitable community in order to create a just and inclusive society of active citizens, effective institutions, and a healthy democracy. Independent Sector is a nonpartisan organization that neither supports nor opposes any political party or candidate for office.

Your responses will be shared with our members, who collectively represent tens of thousands of organizations of every size in every region of the country. At last tally, this network reaches over 27 million Twitter followers and more than 44 million Facebook likes. To allow us to share your full response, please keep answers to no more than 250 words. You may attach any related materials or expanded explanations of your answers. If you have any questions, or for more information, please contact Dan Cardinali at danc@independentsector.org.

CANDIDATE INFORMATION

Candidate Name: Pete Buttigieg

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CANDIDATE QUESTIONS

1) Please describe how you have been personally involved in, supported, or been affected by the nonprofit sector.

The nonprofit sector has been a key partner for me to implement initiatives that advance justice, equity, and opportunity in South Bend. For example, I worked with La Casa De Amistad, a major South Bend Latino outreach center, to create, and distribute a municipal ID card for the 4,500 undocumented immigrants living in South Bend. I collaborated with a coalition of nonprofit organizations to open the West Side Small Business Resource Center in order to support small business development and narrow South Bend’s racial wealth gap. In addition, I worked with Beacon Health System, a locally owned nonprofit health system, and other local organizations to roll out South Bend’s version of President Obama’s My Brother’s Keeper Initiative.

With the University of Notre Dame, I partnered on a smart sewers project, which stopped over 1,500 gallons of sewage from entering the St. Joseph river and reduced sewer overflow by 75%. I also worked with Notre Dame to help move growing technology companies from Innovation Park to Ignition Park, which is where South Bend’s closed Studebaker plant used to be. This helped spur entrepreneurship in South Bend and further integrate the university into the city. And, to help workers transition to digital jobs, my administration funded South Bend Code School, a nonprofit for students ages 7-18 that teaches programming and business planning.

I am deeply committed to finding innovative ways to bring resources, ideas, and strategies from the government and nonprofit sectors together to tackle challenges.

2) Given its roles in delivering government services, pursuing innovative solutions, filling systemic gaps, and advocating for social change, the nonprofit sector is a key operating partner for every president. How will your administration rely on the nonprofit sector to implement your priorities, and how will you seek the sector’s input on those priorities?

I know the importance of empowering local communities with resources and tools from the federal government to develop tailored solutions to the unique challenges they face. The nonprofit sector is a critical partner for designing, implementing, and ensuring the success of these tailored solutions. Consequently, my policy proposals account for the indispensable role of nonprofit organizations in community-driven initiatives.

For example, as part of my [Douglass Plan](#), I will designate and fund Health Equity Zones to address communities' most pressing health disparities. One key aspect of this will be building multi-sector coalitions, in which nonprofit organizations will play a central role, that focus on closing health disparities, and reflect the fundamental economic, social, and political determinants of health in each community.

To support community-driven solutions to mental illness and substance abuse, I will create a \$100 billion grant program that empowers communities to leverage their own innovation to improve mental health and prevent addiction, as part of my [mental health policy](#). I will encourage local governments to partner with nonprofits to implement these solutions.

In my [climate plan](#), I propose creating Regional Resilience Hubs to help communities understand and address their climate risks. Each Regional Resilience Hub will have a Board of Advisors made up of local elected leaders, community leaders, and other citizens, and I expect that nonprofit organizations will provide critical leadership for these boards.

These exemplify my approach towards engaging nonprofits throughout my administration's work to empower local communities. We will consult with nonprofit leaders as we determine the best ways to evaluate grant proposals, deploy funding, build partnerships to execute on promises, and measure impact.

3) Charitable giving is a central piece of our national identity and has been bolstered by the tax code for over 100 years. Do you believe that the tax code should encourage charitable giving, and in what ways?

Yes, there should be a tax deduction for charitable giving.

4) In addition to financial support, Americans also give back by investing time in their communities. What role do you believe volunteerism and national service play in facing our nation's challenges, and what policies— if any—would you pursue to encourage volunteerism and national service?

No single policy solution carries the promise of democratic renewal as strongly as national service. The very first policy I released was a [plan to boost national service and volunteerism](#). As a veteran, I have seen firsthand the power of serving your community or your country, of standing shoulder-to-shoulder with other Americans for a greater purpose. I believe that young people should not need to go to war to get that experience. Therefore, I will expand paid service opportunities through three key areas.

First, I will fund the Serve America Act to increase paid service opportunities from 75,000 to 250,000 in the existing federal and AmeriCorps grantee organizations and through new Service Year Fellowships, targeting high school, community college, vocational, HBCUs and MSI students, and opportunity youth (out of school and work).

Second, I will offer competitive grant funding for cities, counties, and communities to create ecosystems of service around regional issues. These grants would be built on the Cities of Service model.

Third, I will quadruple service opportunities to 1 million high school graduates by 2026. I will create a position of Chief Service Officer with standing on the National Security Council and the Domestic Policy Council. I will expand existing and create new service corps including a Climate Corps, Community Health Corps, and Intergenerational Service Corps.

The goal of my National Service Plan is to have a generation of American youth, bound by mutual service and sacrifice; aware of the common values that bind all Americans; influenced by the experience of doing real work with people across races, politics, faiths, income levels, and gender identities; and imbued with an appreciation of the effort required to maintain a democracy can help heal a divided nation and create better American and global citizens.

5) More than 10 percent of America’s private workforce is employed by nonprofit organizations, but our sector faces unique workforce development challenges. How will you help nonprofit organizations attract, develop, diversify and retain the workforce needed to best serve their communities?

Public service is an important part of all of our plans. To attract and retain talent in public service, we will expand and improve public service loan forgiveness that supports individuals in bringing their talents to the nonprofit and public sector. We will make a \$500 billion investment in ensuring that all Americans have access to college and workforce development opportunities, as described in my [education and workforce development policy](#). We will invest \$50B investment in HBCUs and other Minority-Serving Institutions to ensure a diverse talent pipeline. We will form a presidential “Skills Cabinet” to develop and invest in the first-ever skills strategy for the United States, and provide \$100 million annually in scaling locally-driven public-private workforce partnerships that deliver results for local workers and businesses. The nonprofit sector will be a critical partner. We will incorporate nonprofit sector workforce development into the skills strategy, ensure nonprofit leaders participate in the Skills Cabinet, and participate in workforce partnerships.