

Strengthening Civic Infrastructure in the Build Back Better Act

November 15, 2021

The Honorable John Yarmuth, Chairman
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jason Smith, Ranking Member
Committee on the Budget
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Yarmuth and Ranking Member Smith,

We write to express our support for key provisions in the *Build Back Better Act* that would bolster community and civic infrastructure across America. These investments will strengthen the fabric that binds our nation together and help nonprofit organizations ensure all communities – especially those disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic – can rebuild, engage, and thrive.

We are members of the Nonprofit Infrastructure Investment Advocacy Group (NIIAG), a coalition of over 50 organizations that supports policies recognizing the essential role community and civic infrastructure plays in meeting the challenges of the pandemic and the need to rebuild our nation. Nonprofit organizations have played a critical role in responding to this crisis, and key investments would help them further contribute to uplifting communities in the months and years to come. We are grateful that the *Build Back Better Act* identifies numerous priorities outlined in the most recent [NIIAG policy agenda](#) and we urge you to retain these provisions as the legislation moves forward.

Specifically, we write to express our support for the following:

- **Child care for working families** - The pandemic laid bare America's broken child care system, and women – who comprise 66% of the nonprofit workforce – have been disproportionately impacted as they carry an outsized caregiving burden. For nonprofits to continue to support our communities and build back a strong economy, we need significant investment in child care infrastructure. We applaud the inclusion of over \$100 billion for high-quality, affordable child care, in addition to providing universal Pre-K education.
- **Broadband access for all** - Many nonprofit services in distance learning, telemedicine, and the arts are only as effective as the internet connection on the other end of the line. Building on the generational investment of \$65 billion through the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, we applaud the inclusion of \$300 million for a broadband affordability pilot program, as well as additional funding for access to connected devices and the Emergency Connectivity Fund.
- **Workforce development and job training** - Employees of nonprofit organizations comprise more than 10% of the nation's workforce, and nonprofit jobs led the way to recovery after the most recent recession. We applaud the inclusion of \$20 billion in workforce funding, including funds for registered apprenticeships and community college partnerships. These trainings and wraparound services can help dislocated workers gain new skills and find employment in highly sought job sectors, including those that are core to the nonprofit sector, such as caregiving and clean energy. We also welcome this legislation's further investment in an equitable workforce through \$9 billion for tuition assistance and research infrastructure for minority-serving institutions of higher education.
- **Civilian Climate Corps** - Nonprofits long have been at the forefront of promoting both environmental conservation and civil service. We applaud the inclusion of a 300,000-member Civilian Climate Corps, anchored by a transformative investment in the Corporation for National and Community Service and

bolstered by additional support for key programs at the Department of Labor. In addition to building the environmental infrastructure and conservation workforce of the future, we are grateful that the *Build Back Better Act* will expand equitable access to national service programs by increasing the education award for all AmeriCorps programs.

- **Community investment, development and revitalization** - Nonprofits are at the center of community recovery, development, and resilience, but it is a job that is too big to shoulder alone. We applaud the inclusion of \$3 billion for the Community Development Block Grant program to provide critical flexible funding for cities, states, and tribal communities to address gaps in infrastructure and public services. We are further grateful that the *Build Back Better Act* invests in building energy efficiency and lead remediation while providing \$100 million for urban parks to advance equitable access to recreation.
- **Creation and preservation of affordable housing** - Access to affordable, structurally sound housing and community facilities is a key component in effective nonprofit services, but housing affordability is an ongoing national crisis. We applaud the inclusion of \$25 billion for the HOME Investment Partnerships Program, to support construction and rehabilitation of affordable homes for purchase and rent. We also deeply appreciate the legislation's investment in affordable housing activities for Native Americans and technical assistance for community-led nonprofits.
- **Reconnecting Communities** - Some past transportation projects damaged communities or left out the people most in need of affordable transportation options, making nonprofit organizations' missions to uplift and transform even more difficult. We applaud this legislation for building on the program established in the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* and investing an additional \$4 billion in reconnecting neighborhoods and remediating the harmful consequences of past projects on underserved communities.

We thank you for the work that you and your colleagues continue to do to ensure an equitable recovery from this crisis, in ways that make America better than before. Nonprofit organizations are an indispensable and trusted partner in this work. That is why we support these provisions and ask you to work for their enactment.

Nonprofits need these tools to go about the business of rebuilding our future. There is much work to do and we need your help.

Sincerely,

Americans for the Arts
Americans for the Arts Action Fund
City Parks Alliance
Communities in Schools
Community Resource Center
Connecticut Council for Philanthropy
Council of Michigan Foundations
Goodwill Industries International, Inc
Grantmakers in the Arts
Independent Sector
KABOOM!
Leadership Foundations
League of California Community Foundations
Maryland Philanthropy Network
MENTOR
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits

National Community Action Partnership
National Indian Child Welfare Association
National Recreation and Park Association
National Urban Indian Family Coalition
Native Ways Federation
Points of Light
Raising a Village Foundation
Reinvigorating the Conversation
Service Year Alliance
States for Service Coalition
Strive Together
The Henry Ford
United Philanthropy Forum
United Way Worldwide
VolunteerMatch