



On April 13, 2020 more than 170 nonprofit representatives joined a special virtual forum focused on managing the COVID19 pandemic hosted by the Dr. Lucy Jones Center with the Center for Nonprofit Management, LA Area Chamber of Commerce, Valley Nonprofit Resources, and Wells Fargo. This forum provided an opportunity for breakout groups that answered two key questions. The compiled answers are listed below and offer tools and approaches others might consider during this crisis.

Question 1: What activities or tools are helping your nonprofit to be resilient in this disaster?

1. Using social media (i.e. Getty curator video tours on Twitter/Facebook) to engage despite the physical distancing that is taking place.
2. Utilizing tools like Zoom and Slack to maintain communication with one another as we work remotely.

“Everyone in the group is using Slack as an internal communication tool. It makes it easy for on-site staff to quickly share pictures and info from their phones without having to get to a computer for email. It gives us a chance to have text-like messaging that we can respond to with emojis to keep it light, but also share pictures, documents, and ask quick questions.”

3. Being responsive to local nonprofit needs via virtual seminars with topics around COVID-19 resources and one-on-one support (i.e. open office hours)
4. Responding to the crisis by continuing the work that supports the nonprofit sector and adapting to current conditions (i.e. moving forward with a virtual conference)
5. Do regularly scheduled status checks, asking: How is our organization responding to this crisis? What are we doing well? Where can we improve?
6. More Communication. Communications seems to be the area of greatest change -- changing the means and frequency of communications with constituents, staff, board, supporters and others.
7. Intentionality in so many ways: mindfulness, increase in collaborations
8. Create more fun on purpose

9. Flexibility of staff, board and constituents served is key and all are pleased to find such a high degree of flexibility across the board.
10. Pacing the day differently (Days are longer. You sit down and you've begun your day.)
11. Younger staff and volunteers need extra support as the isolation is really hard on them, and they are also dealing with young children, etc.
12. Existing volunteers are a great resource and easier to effectively mobilize than taking on new people.
13. Managing resources with a different level of efficiency.
14. A new ergonomics workshop
15. Being present & available to those in need.
16. For one homeless service agency, the County DPH guidance through conference calls and briefings has been helpful in guiding us through operational changes to ensure safe space for those in the shelter, for staff, for volunteers, and for guests.
17. Doing some or all programming online. For example, the Grammy Museum is offering literally all of its programs (everything from individual instrumental lessons to concerts and speaker discussions) online and for free, for now.
18. Working closer with Chambers of Commerce, community care licensing, and health related orgs
19. Continuing to utilize art as a way to heal and connect one another in an uncertain time.
20. As a local food bank, we had no choice but to get rid of options that encouraged bad behavior (hoarding and shrinkage from letting agencies shop in their warehouse and rummage through boxes). Now that it's clear how much better it is to get orders in advance and pre-pack most of the food, we won't go back and don't have to worry about being perceived as too much tough love.
21. Organizations are exploring how their Annual (fundraising) Gala can be executed for maximum income. Right now, one organization is exploring whether they might blend both in-person participation with remote participation through Zoom and how best to structure the event.

22. As an essential service, we've benefitted from an outpouring of support from our donors, foundation partners and business supporters. New donors have also stepped forward creating new relationships that we can steward. We are getting a ton of exposure without having to do the work of seeking it out, but it's a lot of work to stay on top of it all and it can be overwhelming.
23. Creating a list of Resources for Students, Parents, Families and Community
24. Zoom meetings with colleagues to plan for the near term (daily) and schedule time for the long-term, as well.
25. Making personal calls to clients to ascertain most pressing needs
26. Providing services to clients through Zoom, from tutoring to counseling and more.

Question 2: As we look to the future, what opportunities are emerging that could be leveraged so that we can work in new ways and better serve our communities?

1. Our group spoke of humor, communication and connection as very important in moving forward. Demonstrating humor, humility and a personal connection to our clients using technology is a substantive opportunity, we well.
2. Some organizations had already developed disaster plans and some had not. But all are now constructing those plans for the future.
3. Organizations are learning that all or at least some staff can work as successfully from home as if they were working together in the office. So these organizations are seeing opportunities develop for reducing rental space needed, reductions in estimates of future travel expenses, and other lowering of overhead costs.
4. A disaster can create a platform for immediate response to address urgent needs that has gone un-addressed prior to the disaster. And we saw that with beds being created overnight for people experiencing homelessness. No nimby-ism - just rapid response to a critical need. That rapid response that occurred becomes the leverage to continue. It happened - and this level of response should continue.
5. The Covid-19 health crisis has required us to be nimble, creative, and thoughtful about how we continue to provide services. New ways of doing things include 24-hour shelter bed availability, re-configuration of space for social distancing, isolation rooms, remote schooling needs, internet connectivity, increased basic hygiene kits, increased laundry,

and maintaining a sense of community without isolation. This should be what our shelters routinely provide.

6. People are getting better at boundaries, shutting off the computer at the end of the day and the need to make it ok to take breaks, have less productive moments/days, etc. as we are all dealing with a whole new way of working.
7. Remote programming required right now could evolve into subscription programs, generating new revenue streams.
8. Some groups, like the San Marcos Chamber (that is largely driven by events), are exploring how Zoom can be used now as needed. They are also considering which events and convenings absolutely need to be conducted in person and which can be continued successfully through Zoom.
9. Continue to collaborate and communicate with different sectors of the community, building off of collaborations that have come together as a result of COVID-19 between nonprofits and/or foundations, corporate sponsors, etc.
10. Understanding the impact of COVID-19 on smaller nonprofits and identifying ways in which formed collaboratives can keep nonprofits open which in turn translates to services continuing to be available for communities most in need.
11. Augment and expand plans already in place
12. We will be socializing differently
13. New business models will emerge
14. Finding ways to use this new remote world to our advantage moving forward / creating tech with a different capture net:
 - a. Continue to do client engagement (e.g. parent workshops) through Zoom
 - b. Online wider audience opportunities reimagined, such as their garden tours with Zoom and YouTube.
15. Organizations are moving toward a future that will be a new normal, and that future is being shaped by the strategies that are being learned now during this recovery time.
16. Increase in distance learning

17. Appreciating value of technology and preparing for that in the future as a continued practice
18. Providing access to arts/art programming remotely to those who may not have had an opportunity previously (i.e. location, museums not always providing a feeling of being open to all, etc.)
19. Opportunities to break down the barriers to progress is an opportunity we will all be taking advantage of, as well. Things need not go as slowly and bureaucratically as they have in the past.
20. This situation has forced our orgs to rethink what activities are essential and streamline things to be more productive. It has forced some positive changes that would be hard otherwise like letting go of some control/founders' syndrome, embracing new technologies, and dropping parts of our work that we now realize are not as important as we once thought.