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PANO RECEIVES $250,000 IN ARPA RELIEF FUNDS TO SUPPORT PENNSYLVANIA NONPROFITS

[February 23, 2022] The Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO) is receiving $250,000 in federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to support nonprofit organizations throughout the Commonwealth.

The grant funding, allocated through the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development with support from state Senators Carolyn Comitta and Tim Kearney, will address the increased need for technical assistance and training resulting from the pandemic.

Since COVID-19’s beginning, Pennsylvania nonprofits have seen an overwhelming (nearly 20 percent) increase in service demand. According to PANO, demand for the top two needs—housing and utility assistance—has experienced increases of 17 percent and 19 percent, respectively. In addition to an increased demand for services, 87 percent of nonprofits experienced a negative financial impact due to COVID. More recently, many nonprofits are facing significant turnover of qualified employees, an estimated 79 percent of which is attributed to the inability to offer competitive salaries.

Struggling to manage a sharp rise in service demands with a reduced workforce, nonprofits increasingly turn to PANO for technical assistance and training on issues like pandemic-related legal, funding, and HR requirements; flexible strategy and budget development; racial justice programming; and governance support. In turn, PANO’s service requests have increased by 60% since COVID’s beginning.

“PANO is particularly grateful for Senators Comitta and Kearney’s assistance in securing this funding, in recognition of the critical work of nonprofits throughout the state who have worked tirelessly throughout the pandemic,” said PANO Executive Director Anne Gingerich. “Eighty-eight percent of all nonprofits have budgets under $500,000, and thus often lack organizational capacity. PANO walks alongside these organizations, assisting them to reach the capacity needed for mission fulfillment. With their support, the Senators elevate the value of PANO and the nonprofit professionals who find needed resources and connect with each other through PANO’s work.”
The ARPA funding will be used by PANO to support its nonprofit partner organizations by offering:

- Nonprofit helpdesk support for all things related to nonprofit management and governance.
- Online workshops and a hybrid conference to connect nonprofit professionals to expertise and to each other.
- Access to Standards for Excellence resource packets, which include the most up-to-date guidance related to nonprofit law and legal resources governing nonprofit organizations in Pennsylvania.
- Community-based cohorts designed to reshape organizational policies and practices through a racial justice lens, addressing a need identified by nonprofits elevated during the pandemic.

“Like businesses and families across Pennsylvania and the nation, the COVID pandemic has had a significant impact on nonprofit organizations. Facing a heightened demand and reduced staff, many local nonprofits are already doing more with less,” said Comitta. “This investment in PANO and its nonprofit network will help organizations continue to operate effectively and efficiently in meeting the needs of individuals, children, and families. Our communities rely on nonprofits and our nonprofits deserve to know that they can count on PANO and our legislative leaders for much-needed support.”

“Nonprofit organizations take care of our local communities, and we need to make sure they have the support needed to comply with local, state, and federal financial and ethical guidelines while also planning and growing their business and services,” said Kearney. “PANO is a smart investment that can provide the level of board and organizational development and growth required for such a big lift. I will continue to champion funding to support nonprofits and other organizations that look to better our communities and serve constituents.”

Kearney, Comitta, and Gingerich also thanked Pennsylvania Senate Democratic Leader Jay Costa and Senate Democratic Appropriations Committee Chair Vincent Hughes for their work in allocating the funding, as well as U.S. Reps. Chrissy Houlahan and Mary Gay Scanlon for supporting the American Rescue Plan.

"Before serving our community in Congress, I led an early childhood literacy nonprofit in southeastern Pennsylvania,” said Rep. Houlahan. "So, I understand firsthand how vital nonprofits are, especially in times like these when we've seen demand for these community services increase dramatically as a result of the pandemic. I'm thrilled to hear $250,000 in American Rescue Plan funds has been awarded through Sen. Comitta and Sen. Kearney's diligent work. The American Rescue Plan continues to deliver for our vital nonprofits and provide direct help to our community members. I proudly voted for this legislation to support the work of groups like the Maternal and Child Health Consortium of Chester County, the Domestic Violence Center of Chester County, CASA Youth Advocates, and the Delaware Valley Fireman's Association, and I'm looking forward to all the progress that will be made with these funds."

"The Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations (PANO) provides critical logistical support to nonprofits across our region, and we all know about the important role that nonprofits have played in meeting the extraordinary demands created by the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Congresswoman Mary Gay Scanlon. “We passed the American Rescue Plan Act to provide a lifeline for the American people and our economy—including small businesses, nonprofits, and civic institutions. That’s why I am so pleased to see PANO receiving this grant from money we allocated in the American Rescue Plan, allowing PANO to help even more local organizations and the people they serve.”

Several nonprofit organizations in southeastern Pennsylvania welcomed news of the funding and thanked PANO for its ongoing support.

A PANO member for 13 years, the Chester County Maternal and Child Health Consortium (MCHC) works to improve maternal and child health through the collaborative efforts of individuals, providers, and policymakers.
“PANO provides impactful support to hundreds of nonprofits in our region and around the Commonwealth. MCHC has accessed and used organizational policy templates and guidance through PANO’s Standards for Excellence Program. We have obtained and maintained Standards accreditation since 2011,” said Milena Oberti-Lanz, MCHC Executive Director. “PANO’s tools helped us build a strong foundation so that we can continue to achieve our mission, ensuring that families start healthy, stay healthy, and succeed in school. PANO has brought us to a different level in showing that we have taken every step to ensure we’re serving the community and operating ethically and responsibly.”

The Delaware County Firemen’s Association provides leadership, support, and opportunities for advancement in representing firefighters, fire departments, and emergency service providers in Delaware County.

“In my engagement with the Fire and EMS Administrative Officer Course, developed by Public Safety Training Program at Harrisburg Area Community College and PANO, I learned about elements of nonprofit management which I previously only understood in a cursory way,” said Tom Savage, Treasurer and Past President, Delaware County Firemen’s Association. “For example, I gained a deeper understanding of the importance of well-defined bylaws, board governance responsibilities, a strong strategic plan, and financial oversight including internal controls. I used the valuable information and materials I received to train our Executive Board, which led to better productivity and overall effectiveness, and as a result, a few Board members also attended the course.”

An accredited organization and PANO member for more than a decade, the Domestic Violence Center of Chester County (DVCCC) is committed to working to prevent domestic violence and empowering survivors of domestic abuse through providing information and supporting them as they reclaim their lives.

“PANO’s Standards for Excellence Accreditation provides nonprofit organizations with support and materials to successfully achieve organizational strength. This external review of organizational policies, procedures, practices, financial health, and program evaluation enhances sustainability, and the overall process is priceless!” said Dolly Wideman Scott, DVCCC CEO. “Having documents in one place helps with the ease of legal compliance as the organization has gone through rigorous monitoring processes by local, state, and federal funding partners. The accountability facilitates best practices and ongoing engagement of our various stakeholders.”

CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates) Youth Advocates helps ensure that children who have experienced abuse or neglect can be safe, have a permanent home, and achieve a bright future.

“CASA Youth Advocates has experienced significant increases and changing needs for our advocacy services on behalf of abused and neglected children in Delaware and Chester counties over the last two years as our communities have navigated the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Executive Director Leigh Anne McKelvey. “As a small nonprofit organization rapidly evolving and working to be adaptive to the needs of the children and youth we serve, we rely heavily on PANO to provide guidance on best practices, resources to build and retain a competent and dedicated Board of Directors and staff, and support with policies and procedures that advance our organizational health and ensure legal compliance.”

For more information on PANO’s services, visit www.pano.org and read about the experiences of current PANO members.

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About PANO
PANO amplifies the voice, value, and impact of community benefit work to transform lives. PANO, a statewide membership organization, supports the work of 1,000 nonprofits, who collectively employ 25,000 individuals. PANO provides training, consulting, advocacy, and “just-in-time” helpdesk support, walking alongside organizations and individuals working to improve the quality of life in Pennsylvania. To learn more about PANO, please visit www.pano.org.