



For Immediate Release: June 18, 2020

**WNY COVID-19 COMMUNITY RESPONSE FUND IS SEEKING IDEAS FROM
NONPROFITS TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES MAGNIFIED BY COVID-19 CRISIS**

Buffalo, N.Y. – The Western New York COVID-19 Community Response Fund, a collaborative philanthropic effort launched in mid-March to address the COVID-19 crisis in our community, released a Request for Ideas (RFI) today to seek out visionary concepts from nonprofit leaders to address challenges our community is facing due to COVID-19, coupled with the persistent challenges of racial inequities. The ideas should have the potential to improve the quality of life for people living in Western New York and strengthen services that have been stretched beyond capacity.

The RFI is designed to be a first step to surface collaborative solutions as the Fund enters a Build Back Better phase to focus on COVID-19 recovery efforts in our region. **The deadline to submit ideas is July 31, 2020 at 3 p.m.**

RFI submissions are encouraged to consider at least one of the following: geographic coordination, collaborative issue-area coordination, cross-issue or cross-sector coordination. Issue areas may include, but are not limited to: food security, housing and homelessness, childcare, arts and culture, out of school time, behavioral health, community-based health, and eldercare support and services.

Idea submissions should take into account the following **guiding principles**:

- Racial Equity
- Equity for Vulnerable Populations
- Regional Approach (Where Applicable)
- Alignment with Social Determinants of Health (Where Applicable)
- Trauma-Informed Care Principles
- Inclusion of Human-Centered Design
- Nonprofit-Led Cross-Sector Collaboration (e.g., Public, Private, Nonprofit)
- Leading to Systems Change
- Public Policy Component (Where Applicable)

— MORE —

There will be two virtual information sessions held in late June. For details on those sessions, and to read the full RFI and submit ideas, please visit this website:

<https://www.cfgb.org/nonprofits/grants/wny-covid-19-community-response-fund-build-back-better-request-for-ideas>

“During the COVID-19 pandemic, profound inequities and challenges have been compounded and systems have been stretched beyond capacity in providing services to vulnerable populations in Western New York. We are looking for innovative, collaborative ideas from and for the nonprofit sector on how we can work together in new ways to meet the needs of this region moving forward, ” said Clotilde Perez-Bode Dedecker, President/CEO Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo

“People often want to look to funders for the answers during a crisis, but we are seldom the ones on the ground working in the community. The best ideas and solutions for how this region can begin to retool and rebound need to come directly from the nonprofits and organizations that are seeing firsthand the greatest needs and opportunity to make an impact,” said David O. Egner, President & CEO, Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation, a contributor to the Fund. “The Build Back Better RFI is a simple process to just get these ideas down in writing, so we can respond and apply the resources needed to explore their potential.”

“Using critical funds for new recovery ideas while there is still great immediate need in our community may be difficult to accept, but we believe it is the only way to set the stage for real and lasting change,” said Paul T. Hogan, Executive Vice President of the Oishei Foundation. “Putting things back together better can only happen properly while they are still apart, and this is a rare opportunity to innovate and create change.”

The WNY COVID-19 Community Response Fund was launched on March 24, 2020, and to date has raised nearly \$8 Million dollars from 60 local foundations and private sector companies, more than 40 community leaders and approximately 1,900 individuals. To see a full list of contributors, or to join the effort, please visit www.WNYResponds.org.

The Fund has now awarded over \$6.9 Million to more than 300 nonprofits through three rounds of grant funding and a microgrants program. Additional dollars raised will support the Build Back Better effort, including moving some of the ideas submitted in this process forward. The Fund has been coordinated by the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Health Foundation for Western & Central New York, The John R. Oishei Foundation and the United Way of Buffalo & Erie County.

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